

One of the most colorful and successful of all youth centers is the Open Door at Hudson Guild House in *New York City's* Chelsea area. In the neighborhood once known as "Hell's Kitchen," the Open Door has brought many teens into the settlement house for the first time. More than half of the Open Door's regulars are newcomers to Guild House activities.

There is little regimentation at the Open Door. Teens may not gamble but those who want to, play cards and smoke. To critics of this policy, the sponsors have two answers: It is better to let teens smoke and play cards at the canteen than to send them away. It is noticeable that there are fewer teen-age smokers as time goes on.

The Open Door is noisy and the lights are bright. Chaperoning is provided unobtrusively by a young married woman who grew up in the neighborhood and knows most of the youngsters.

"We're all here together, girls and fellers," one of the members said. "You say what you want, do what you want, dance, come and go as you want, and the more noise the better we like it. We know we have to keep in line, or they'll close the place, and then we'll have no place to go."

### **Pattern for Success**

By now, the pattern for such youth centers is fairly well set. Club atmosphere prevails; tables, a dance floor, milk bar and juke box are standard equipment. Club names must sparkle and entertainment must be varied. Often the high school orchestra becomes the club orchestra, and plays for amateur floor shows. Home-made decorations, changed from time to time, add a theme to the program. A teen-age Gay Nineties club may have singing waiters, costume parties, and music to carry out the period. Again, the club may be decorated in Mexican trappings, and the orchestra or juke box will "give out" rhumbas.

An occasional radio singer or popular actor is a tremendous drawing card.