THE CHILDREN'S HOME OF PITTSBURGH

A CENTURY OF SERVICE AND CARING

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The Children's Home of Pittsburgh
5618 Kentucky Avenue
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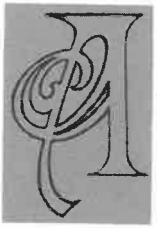
DEDICATION

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of The Children's Home of Pittsburgh, this history of the Home is dedicated to the memory of Jane Phillips Follansbee who served for thirty years on its Board of Directors.

Janey fed and rocked almost a generation of Children's Home babies, and the love she passed onto them was the basis of her dedication and commitment to the Home. She is remembered as a "super volunteer" and was an inspiration to those who worked with her.

The Children's Home is grateful to Dr. and Mrs. William Follansbee and Linda Follansbee Polcyn whose generosity made possible this history and this tribute to Janey Follansbee. The Home also appreciates the financial support of the family of Mary Gellatly Walker and the family and friends of Ernest Rutherford Braun, Jr. toward the publication of this book.

CONTENTS



CKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The history, more appropriately an overview, has attempted to highlight major events and trends relevant to The Children's Home of Pittsburgh. It would have been impossible to include or mention all of the dedicated individuals whose efforts and commitment on behalf of infants and families have contributed to the Home's 100 years of achievement and service.

Since the earlier sections of this chronicle obviously could not be enhanced by personal recollections, sources of information on the early activities of the Children's Home have been confined to Board minutes, some local newspapers, isolated records, and city documents.

The records of the later years, however, have indeed been enhanced by recollections of former and present Board members and staff. Their loyalty to the Home and its work made their contributions invaluable not only to the Home iteslf, but to this history. The authors wish to thank those lised below for their time and help, and apologize for any omissions which may have occurred.

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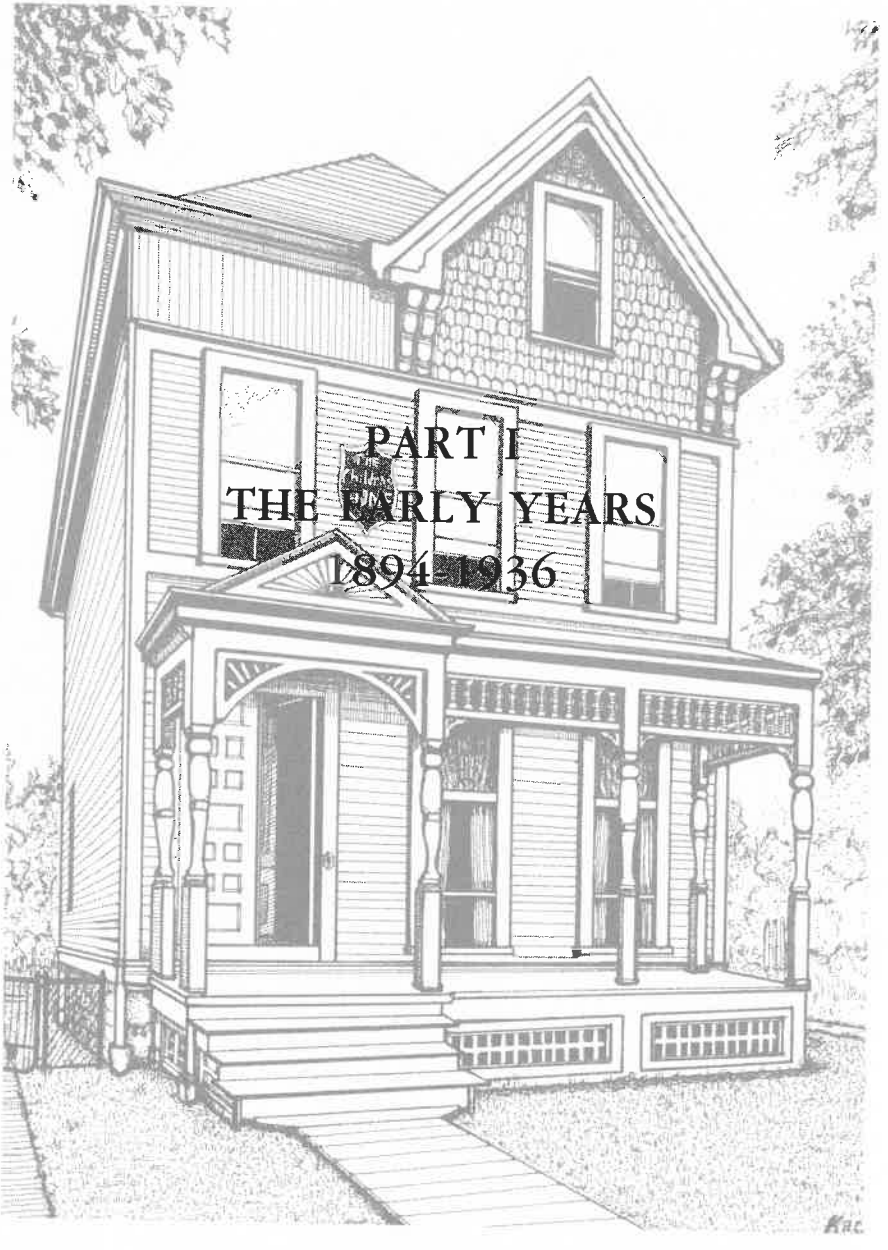
EDITOR'S NOTE

A number of people provided assistance in preparing this work for publication. In particular, the following deserve special thanks and recognition:

Mitzi Ridall, for her wisdom, Board perspective and invaluable enthusiasm and creative input; Marty Blasier, for her expertise and sound editorial advice; Nancy Kinneavy, for her wordprocessing skills and ability to graciously endure innumerable revisions; and Chuck Ebert, for his patience, moral support and willingness to learn more about the Children's Home of Pittsburgh than he ever bargained for!

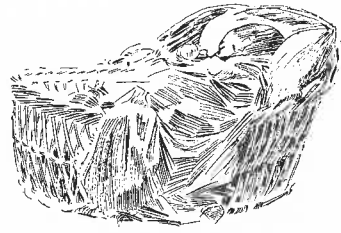
P.R.E.



PART I
THE EARLY YEARS
1894–1936

In The Beginning

Our work began in March 1894. The first child, a little boy named Walter, came into our hands on May 15, 1894. He was six months old. The first application came a few days later from Luzerne County, and we placed that first child there, a deaconess acting as escort.



So the Reverend W. Henry Thompson described, some twenty years later, the first placement made by The Children's Home of Pittsburgh which, strictly speaking, was not yet in existence. Henry Thompson was the founder and head of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society which in 1936 would be dissolved to become The Children's Home of Pittsburgh.

The Children's Home Society had been started in a small town in central Illinois by a Presbyterian minister, Reverend M.V. Van Arsdale. In 1883 Dr. Van Arsdale place a child in a family home and arranged for its supervision. During that same year he placed a total of forty children. His was the beginning of a movement that resulted in the organization of thirty-six state societies, some of which have branches still in existence. An early report mentions that the first name of the movement was:

> *The American Education Association. That being too far in advance of the public mind, he renamed us The Children's Home Society.*

Pennsylvania came into the Society on March 15, 1894, when the Reverend Thompson was authorized by the national Society to take charge as State Superintendent. His records state:

> *We rented an office as soon as we felt justified in doing so. Also rented our first desk. We made friends, prepared the way, organized local Boards, appointed local advisors, cared for our children (largely in our own home), Mrs. Thompson ministering to them and assisting in placing.*

Whether Pennsylvania's mission was typical or not, Henry Thompson was given only a title and was awarded neither funds nor travel expenses. However, having spent his own childhood in an orphanage, he knew there could be a better life for homeless and orphaned children, and he was eager to try to give it to them. Thompson was indeed ahead of his time in realizing that a family

The "Coffey" children found on a Christmas morning four miles from Shippensberg, PA, aged 13 - 10 - 5 - 2½. The temperature was 3 degrees, and there was no heat or fire in the house. They were clothed as shown.

home is the best place for a child to be. He spent his life driven by that belief.

The Pennsylvania Children's Home Society was a natural outgrowth of the political, economic and social climate of the 19th century. The 1800's, in the United States as well as Europe, was a period of enormous changes. Industrialization was changing America from a primarily rural agricultural society to ever-growing urban communities, creating poverty even as it made fortunes. The advent of labor-saving machines and the growth of mills and factories took business away from the local miller and the small harness-maker, virtually ensuring a new larger class of people living close to poverty. The immigration workers in the mid-1800's added even more numbers to the new urban poor, and Pittsburgh in particular, with its steel mills, iron works and foundries, had more than its share of imported cheap labor. Many of these new Americans barely made enough to feed and clothe themselves, and those with large families were extremely hard-pressed.

Young children in particular were victims of the economic conditions, not protected by law or custom. Large numbers of them were deserted and existed on the streets as best they could. It was during these times that socially conscious individuals and groups became aware of the enormity of the problem and began to try to help these unfortunate children. In the Pittsburgh area, aid societies were formed, and countless institutions, orphanages, and county homes were built to house a seemingly endless supply of homeless children.

Henry Thompson and his wife spent two years in Pittsburgh working for the national Children's Home Society before a local branch of that organization was formed. There is no specific information on why Pittsburgh was chosen either by the Thompsons or by the Society, but certainly the city's social conditions warranted it. "Hell with the lid taken off," was how writer James Parton described the city in an Atlantic article in January 1888.

Organization and Mission

On April 13, 1896 the Reverend Thompson, State Superintendent of the newly formed Pennsylvania Chapter of the Children's Home Society, convened a group of several leading Pittsburghers who shared his dedication to the cause of needy children. The minutes recorded:

> *A meeting was held in the chapel of the McKeesport YMCA for the purpose of organizing a local advisory Board of the Children's Home Society. Present were Rev. W. Henry Thompson, Rev. David Flanigan, Rev. J.J. McCurrell, Rev. U.W. McMillan, Dr. H.S. Newlin, Mrs. A.B. Campbell, and E.H. Leizure.*

To this list of members of the first Board were added the names of Mrs. Theodore Tonneli and Mrs. J.A. Jackson. Reverend Thompson pointed out the necessity for a state organization of this national Society to be incorporated under Pennsylvania law and explained how it would operate.

J.W. Fawcett

The first meetings were concerned with setting up the Constitution, the bylaws of the new Society and the committees that would carry on the work. These included the Credentials Committee, the Executive Committee, the Committee on Temporary Homes, and the Nominating Committee. The latter was quite important in the early years in searching for interested and qualified members. In subsequent years committees on Auditing and Finances were established, as were special committees as the need arose. Early vice presidents of the Society were all ministers from Pittsburgh and nearby towns. Honorary vice presidents were generally businessmen chosen from across the state.

In a public meeting in May 1896, Hudson Samson was elected President, E.H. Leizure, Secretary, and J.W. Fawcett, M.D., Treasurer. They comprised the Executive Committee with Reverend C.M. Miller and Mrs. A.B. Campbell. The Committee of Temporary Homes included Samson, Leizure, Fawcett, Miller and Henry Thompson, member ex-officio. These individuals were to serve the Society for many years to come.

At its meeting in June of that year, the Executive Committee approved the following circular letter. It is quoted here in its entirety, for it plainly states not

only the goals of the Society, but also Henry Thompson's strong views on child placement. It was addressed to:

> *County Commissioners, Poor Directors, Overseers and Others whose Duties require them to deal with Destitute and Neglected Children Throughout the State of Pennsylvania:*
>
> *The Pennsylvania Children's Home Society is distinctively a home-finding and home-placing Society. Its distinctive work is the permanent and final placement of eligible children who are homeless from any cause, into carefully selected and thoroughly supervised family homes. It has the prestige of representative names on its officiary and of singular success. It desires to cooperate with all who are called upon to deal with the destitute and needy in child life. It is ready to supplement the work of the various institutions or local operations, as well as by its aggressive Christian methods, in the final disposal of placeable children in suitable homes. The State Superintendent is prepared to open correspondence with all interested in the welfare and destiny of children with a view to cooperating on their behalf.*

At the same June meeting it was decided that the Executive Committee would meet on the second Monday of each month in Mr. Samson's office, and the annual meeting would be held on the second Monday in June, a practice that would continue for almost forty years.

On July 13, 1898 a charter of incorporation was secured, four years after work had actually been started. The bylaws, which were taken from Gregg's Manual and modified for local conditions, have changed somewhat throughout the years, but in essence today remain similar to the original 1898 version. The Board, which started with ten members elected annually, added fourteen more within two years. And while its composition varied with the years, its role of directing the care and placement of homeless children remained constant.

Early Funding

Fundraising played an important role in the early history of the Home as it does today. The means of securing income was proclaimed in the charter of 1898 which stipulated four classes of membership of the corporation. Known as Annual, Life, Patron Life and Benefactor Life members, they were to contribute annually the sums of $1, $25, $50, or $100. Other necessary income was to be "secured by public contributions."

Missionary field workers solicited contributions in the field and received salaries proportional to their collections. The exception was the State Superintendent who, although he too collected funds for the organization, received a flat salary which ranged from $1,800 in the early years paid to Henry Thompson, to $3,600 paid in 1934 to Elmer Harter.

The collections were split on a 2-1 basis between the worker and the Society, with the larger share going to the Society. There were about six or seven missionaries in those early years who collected an average of $225 monthly. That provided $150 per worker for the Society, or a monthly income from collections of between $1,100 and $1,200. With the $500 per month from the Society's members, total monthly income came to approximately $1,700.

In 1915 the Board started to augment income by writing to friends and interested parties. In subsequent years, Donation Day and later Tag Day, the yearly street solicitation, became popular ways to increase operating revenues. These practices in time brought in more money than missionary collections which continued, however, until the Pennsylvania Society as such was dissolved in 1936.

Early Workers

By the annual meeting of June 1897, Pennsylvania had been divided into six districts, two each in the western, central and eastern sections. Each district was overseen by a minister from the area whose job was to spread the word of the Society's mission and to solicit money to fund it. The ministers were helped in their efforts by local advisory Boards which were formed all over the state and became very important to the work of the society.

The contributions of these local Boards were invaluable in many ways. As the common practice of the Society was to deliver each child by escort (often Henry Thompson's wife, Ella) to the waiting family, local Board members, both men and women, were of great help in meeting the escorts and assisting in the overnight care of the children if necessary. Locating and endorsing families desiring children, they also reported on the suitability of homes for placement.

Mrs. Ella L. Thompson

Each Board had a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, legal counsel and medical examiner. The first doctor for the new Society was Thomas Kirk, M.D. of East Liberty. Those elected to the Board were all public-spirited individuals including "mayors, chairmen of boroughs, pastors, professors, and ladies conspicuous in church work and social life." (An alphabetical list of Board members, starting with the first meeting in April 1896, can be found at the end of this history).

The hardest part of the work of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society was carried out by the missionaries, the term given to the field workers whose activities were directed by Reverend Thompson and coordinated with the district supervisors. This last group spoke to large numbers of church groups, as described by one worker at the 1898 annual meeting:

> *I presented our work to 110 congregations during the year. I usually asked for ten minutes before or after a sermon, and in that way I could see four or five congregations on a Sunday. If the minister asked me to speak in place of the regular sermon, as they usually did, then I could only see two assemblies that day. I would seldom ask for a collection, but would leave envelopes, some of which would be returned the following Sunday with contributions.*

The loyal workers for the early Society obviously were filled with compassion for the plight of the homeless child. Their work was not easy. The Society was always under-staffed, and the field work was particularly hard, entailing not only taking collections but finding the children who needed homes as well as the families willing to take them. However, most of the workers were devoted to the Society and stayed on for years, usually retiring as a result of age or occasionally by request.

Among the early workers was Mrs. Bessie Russell from St. Paul, Minnesota, who joined the Society in 1897, having heard of Henry Thompson's work. She was so impressed with his efforts and philosophy that she moved to Pennsylvania and worked as a missionary for many years. An example of her tireless efforts can be seen in her report of activities in the central Pennsylvania district from October 1897 to March 1898:

Local Advisory Boards Organized	21
Addresses delivered	35
Miles traveled	1,792
Children placed	8
Children rescued	11
Funds collected	$647.37

Her energy and zeal were prodigious in light of living and traveling conditions of the time. Such dedication wasn't unusual, however, among the workers of the Children's Home Society. Records show long hours and hard days spent by many of them as they tried to help the children of the state.

Another stalwart worker was Henry Thompson himself, who for a time did double or perhaps triple duty. He was Superintendent, handling administrative duties and performing field work of finding homes for as many neglected children as he could. He also solicited collections. Eventually realizing that he could not do it all, he spent most of his time attending to details in Pittsburgh, with sporadic forays throughout the state to solicit funds. In that job he had no peer, and his collections were always the highest of all the workers.

Ella Thompson, Henry's wife, had the title of Assistant Superintendent of Placements, and she too spent long days either delivering children to their new homes, or acting as Matron of the new Home of Temporary Care when it was established. Both jobs were arduous and difficult for her, and she was often reported to be in frail health.

The Reverend Benjamin P. White was another long-time worker for the Society who worked in the field as long as he could, later becoming Field Secretary with liaison duties to other churches and their groups. A staunch employee, he finally was asked to resign over his refusal to make the daily reports of expenses and collections demanded by the Board in later hard times.

Miss A.E. Weissflog

Other missionaries were George Lockhart and Charles T. Bobb, who worked tirelessly in their central Pennsylvania districts until the reorganization in 1936. George Thompson, (no relation to Henry), was also with the Society for many years and is mentioned in Board minutes when he was sent to represent the Society which reportedly gave assistance at the "Austin flood of 1912." Miss Anna Weissflogg was another worker who stayed until 1936, one of the few missionaries who asked for an increase in her salary. Her timing was such that she made this request as the Society was floundering in the depression, and she received only a token raise, resigning shortly thereafter. Another name in the list of early workers was Haddie Trego, who served in many positions in the field and stayed until 1936.

Miss Haddie Trego

Struggles for Recognition

As head of the Pennsylvania Society for some twenty-five years, the Reverend Thompson repeated in almost every annual report his commitment to the family home as the proper place for a child, stating that "institutionalism (long-term) is bad for the domestic and commercial life of the child." As a result of this position, Thompson's methods of child placing were often criticized by the establishment which adhered to the practice of caring for homeless children in large institutions and orphanages. Feeling alone and beleaguered for his ideas, he also thought that he and his Society were not given the attention or assistance of funds that they deserved. He made constant reference to these slights in his annual reports to the Society.

> *As I have from time to time reported, the progress of the work of the Society in this state, where unprecedented prejudice and relentless and bitter opposition has sought to bar and neutralize our efforts, I have surveyed our work . . . with mingled emotions.*

There began to be, however, a gradual acceptance of Thompson's ideas. At Theodore Roosevelt's Conference on Children in 1909, the almost unanimous verdict and one strongly expressed by the President was that the family home is the best place for the child. Endorsements for his opinion also came from the St. Louis Exposition in 1903, the New York Children's Aid Society, the Russell Sage Foundation Conference, and the National Conference of Charities. With those commendations, Thompson felt that the Society finally was becoming recognized for its progress and strength and that his methods were vindicated at last.

Superintendent Thompson always took care to point out that his theories on child placement had the additional advantage of conserving costs. He cited figures in his 1897 annual report showing that his cost per capita for the total number of children handled that year was only $40.46; the cost per capita in an institution was at least $120!

Early Placement Procedures

Early placement procedures were described in the minutes of the annual meeting of 1899 which stated that "all procedures would be conducted in a precise manner." Formal application was required of those wanting a child, and those who wished the Society to care for their children were to make formal petition. Reverend Thompson felt that in this way "some measure of compatibility" could be achieved. At a later annual meeting in 1908, his method was outlined in more detail as follows:

How to get a Child from the Society

1. Write the Superintendent for a blank application.
2. Fill out blank in all particulars.
3. Have the same endorsed.
4. Send good reliable references.
5. Wait patiently till child comes.

How to get a Child into the Society's Care

1. Write for a blank petition.
2. Fill out same, giving all information required.
3. Sign by nearest of kin and others.
4. Have child's physical condition certified.
5. If approved, release blanks will be furnished.
6. Releases must be carefully executed.
7. Do not bring children in advance of the papers.

Upon receiving the application requesting a child, a Society worker made an examination of the family and the home before granting permission for a child to be placed there. The child was then delivered by a worker to the receiving family.

An early application shows the care taken in describing the family's location and proximity to public transportation, which was at that time the railroad and indeed the primary means of delivering a child to the family. Thus, distance from a local depot was of major importance. It also should be remembered that few households in the countryside had telephones to receive messages from arriving guests. The application form also requested information on the availability of a "hack or electric car" for the last leg of the journey, because if there were none, the worker and child would have to travel on foot.

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

REV. W. HENRY THOMPSON, STATE SUPERINTENDENT.

APPLICATION FOR A CHILD.

Date July 6 1909

Name of husband H. H. Miller Age 57

Name of wife Catherine E. Miller Age 53

P. O. Address Clayesville, R.D.#1

Penn. Wash Co.

Occupation Farming and Threshing.

Do you own your home? Yes.

Do you belong to a Church Yes. What denomination?

(We are frequently asked to place children with families of a certain denomination, and do so as far as possible.)

If you do not belong to a church, what one do you attend? Dutch Fork Christian church

How far are you from church? About one hundred yards

How far are you from School? " two " "

Are there any children in the family? If so give age and sex Have children. both boys. ages 32 — 26.

Do you want a boy or girl, and what age? [Give us largest limit possible.] I want a girl, age between 10 and 15.

In what business do you expect to train the child? Housewhole duties. Sewing and S.

Can we send you such a child as you desire at any time? Yes as soon as possible.

From what railroad station can we most conveniently reach your home? Clayesville Penn.

How far and in WHAT DIRECTION from the depot do you live? Six miles directly North.

Is there a back or electric car line from the railroad to or near your home? There is not.

If you can be reached by telephone give NAME OF LINE and telephone number. National telephone, Central Clayesville

What is your nearest telegraph office? Clayesville

How far are you from it? Six miles

Please name a person at or near the depot who will receive the child for you if we SHOULD FAIL TO REACH YOU WITH A NOTICE S. B. Sprouls, also, Rev. Frank Fisher

(Signed) H. H. Miller Husband

(Signed) Catherine E. Miller Wife

(Signed) Widow

NOTE—We receive so many inquiries about children that we ask all who wish to apply to fill out and send in the above blank. A more suitable choice can then be made and the child sent with less liability to error and delay. Write plainly, inclosing any additional information, references, etc., that you may desire to have us consider.

Address,

Rev. W. Henry Thompson, 719 Ferguson Block Fourth Avenue, Pittsburg, Pa.

CONDITIONS.

Upon which Children are Placed in Families.

1. Applicants for children under the care of this Association are expected to be kind-hearted, humane, and up to the standard of approved American citizenship.

2. They must be in such financial circumstances and sustain such relations as to give good advantages and companionships.

3. They must provide suitable food and clothing; and also love, cherish, nurture and in a christian manner, care for and educate them in all ways suitable to their station and condition in life; the same as if they were their own natural children.

4. They are sent on trial a sufficient length of time to insure satisfaction, usually ninety days.

5. If a child is to be returned, thirty days notice should be given; and it should be free from injury, contagious or infectious diseases, comfortably clad and in like good health and condition as when sent out.

6. In no case, for any reason, is a child to be given away to a third party without the written consent and approval of the Association.

7. There are two conditions one of which must be chosen on final settlement of a child: (*a*) Legal adoption. (*b*) Special contract, which includes conditions satisfactory to the association that the child will be tenderly and affectionately nurtured and supported, and given a Christian education, and a permanent home until maturity.

NOTES.

We are not an employment bureau. No children are placed or hired out as servants or drudges.

Home and home life is what we seek for our little ones.

It is not necessary for applicants to be members of, or even contributors to the funds of the Society in order to receive a child.

Few, if any children, can ever be seen at our office, for the reason that we have, at all times, approved family homes open to receive them, fast as they come in.

We quite frequently have placed at our disposal parties of desirable children from public institutions in this and adjoining States. Suitable families with applications on file are often acceptably supplied from this source.

A family's location and proximity to the local railroad depot was of major importance.

There were many more applications for older children than for younger ones. Many times children were wanted primarily for farm or domestic work.

The inspection of the home and foster family placement was of major concern to Henry Thompson. Society field workers agreed completely with him and also recognized the importance of matching family with child. Although they did their best to facilitate this, the workers were pitifully few and far outnumbered by the children needing care, making the job extremely difficult. Thompson, noting that there were three to four times as many applications for older children than for the younger ones and babies, stated that:

> *The homes that come to us as the result of our missionary work are more satisfactory as a rule than those that voluntarily come, especially for the older children.*

He knew that many times children were wanted primarily for farm or domestic work.

Returning a child in the early days was commonplace, and in every annual report, the number of children returned during the year was part of the overall statistics. Thompson's awareness and understanding of the situation is noted in his report in 1901 in which he said:

> *The cause is not always the child; more often it is the foster parents. All children are not alike, and some of them do not so easily adjust as others.*

In those early years the Society sometimes literally had to beg people to take its children. At times families were quite selective and would have specific qualifications of age and appearance. In an annual report as late as 1925, Henry Thompson speaks of a woman who:

> *Writes that she desires a child about one year and one month to two years old, thirty inches tall with real blonde hair, dark blue eyes, small nose, small mouth, pretty features, small hands and feet, a sweet disposition, a good parentage, and a brilliant mind.*

He added that this request was unusual.

In inspecting homes of those applying for a child, the rules were not stringent, but "the keeping of a moral household" seemed to have been of great importance. With all best intentions, the Society tried to keep up the inspections both before and after placement, but a shortage of money and workers often prevented the follow-up, a great concern to Thompson.

There were few mandatory legal procedures for formal adoption in existence in those days. Children were placed in the most suitable home available, and

only sometimes was the child adopted. As time went on, of course, these practices changed, but for the early Children's Home Society, placement was simply that . . . placement. From the beginning, however, the Society was aware that formal adoption was by far the best solution, and in November 1899, it passed a resolution that papers of Agreement of Adoption be issued at time of placement. By 1900 a minimum of two years was put on the placement. After that period, it would be assumed that the child would be adopted, and placed permanently, relieving the Society of further legal responsibility. While this was obviously a move in the right direction, there were lags in enforcement of adoption as well as in careful record keeping. Sometime later it was discovered that a number of children were still on the Society's books who should have been out of its jurisdiction by virtue of adoption, age, marriage, and death.

The children placed by the Society in its early years were of all ages, but none were infants. Thompson, in 1901, felt that:

> *The problem of caring for infants is a very delicate one. It is a special department. The ratio of deaths in foundling institutions is appalling. Still, the state is lacking in arrangements for the immediate care of infants . . . I think it would be desirable to have an auxiliary department for the care of infants.*

Yet, it was not until 1930 that the Home of Temporary Care had a nursery and staff speciallly equipped to care for small babies.

The first recorded legal adoption from the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society was in May 1895. In the next five years, only 35 children were legally adopted out of the 557 children who passed through the hands of the Society. Adoptions gradually increased, however, up to 20 in 1910 which remained the average for many years.

Throughout Henry Thompson's reports over the years, his beliefs in the value of every child as a special person were made clear.

> *From our standpoint, the interest of the child is supreme. There is not such a thing, in fact, as an illegitimate child. The illegitimacy is elsewhere, not upon the child.*

Thompson also felt strongly about the need for education, and thought that the older boys should receive industrial training, the girls domestic skills, and the younger children kindergarten instruction.

Ella Thompson was as dedicated to the children of the Society as was her husband, and she worked diligently as Assistant Superintendent of Placements. Her report in 1898 said:

> *I have had in my immediate care during the year 43 children. These have been each cleansed, clothed, and prepared for travel. I have journeyed myself with 20 children . . . some [of the journeys] were hard and long, and often have the little ones on the cars or in the depots spoken or cried aloud, making unconscious appeals for our work. Many of our wards come to us clean, but some have to be thoroughly cleansed from the foundation to the top. In one case I burned every article worn by the child. In another instance, I walked through the deep snow carrying a small child. It was evening and stormy, and finally I retreated to the village I had left, and sent for the parties to come for the child. It was midnight before the papers were signed and the babe safely housed with its foster parents.*

5439 Potter Street
in Shadyside

135 Pennwood Street
in Edgewood

The Home of Temporary Care

As firmly committed as he was to placing children as soon as possible into family homes, Henry Thompson realized that some housing was required for the children's short-term stays while waiting for families. Since the "short-term stay" was often longer than desired, the Thompsons saw the need for a Temporary Care Home from the beginning days of the Society. They wanted a place to "prepare our beneficiaries for their new homes," both physically and spiritually. Mrs. Thompson was particularly concerned with the need to "cleanse and clothe and make presentable each child prior to conveying it to its assigned home." She stated that "It is not to be expected that people will at once love a strange child unless it is attractive at least in its general appearance."

In February 1899 a suitable house was found on Penn Avenue in Wilkinsburg by a member of the local advisory Board. Known as the Luray House, it was furnished by the Wilkinsburg Ladies Auxiliary but maintained by the local advisory Board. By April it was leased, and the children moved in. The temporary home proved to be both a blessing and a burden. Its need for repairs caused a considerable drain on the Society's finances. That problem was inadvertently solved when one of the children in residence, a girl of thirteen, set fire to the building in anger over being returned from her foster family. No one was injured, however, and the child, after a temporary arrest, was later placed with a family who offered to care for her.

In prompt need of another home, the Board rented 5439 Potter Street in Shadyside for the sum of $27 per month. After a year, however, Reverend Thompson felt the Potter Street home was not suitable for their needs and began to look for another facility.

The search for and discussion of a new home went on for a number of years, during which Thompson revealed a wish to widen the Society's base of operations beyond Pittsburgh to the central and eastern parts of the state. A substantial home was begun by a Mrs. Parker in Carlisle around 1910 "for the care of [our] wards in the beautiful Cumberland Valley." That home, however, was never completed and may have been the beginning of the end of Thompson's hopes for a Carlisle branch of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society. Thompson continued to refer to a long awaited purchase of a Pittsburgh "Receiving Home" in

his reports of 1911, saying that negotiations were pending on a "property in a very desirable location." This was perhaps the first mention of the McAfee property situated in Edgewood Park and acquired by the Society a few years later.

> *The lot is 274' frontage upon Pennsylvania Avenue, which parallels the Pennsylvania Railroad. It extends from Washington to Race Street, giving us the whole frontage of the block. The streets are all paved. We can step from the platform at Edgewood station, cross the street to the front of the entrance. The house is three stories high and basement, solid brick, well built, ample closets, fourteen rooms with reception hall.*

The price settled upon was $15,000, with $8,000 in cash and a mortgage of $7,000.

As of January 2, 1912 the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society "had a good record title to the property," and after thirteen years of rented and less than adequate houses, it finally possessed its own Home of Temporary Care at 135 Pennwood Street in Edgewood.

The Role of Henry Thompson

The role of Henry Thompson in the early years of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society is intertwined with the changes in the national and local child welfare laws. The twenty-five years between Thompson's founding of the Society in 1894 and his resignation in 1919 paralleled the growth of the country's social consciousness into law.

With the large numbers of child protection agencies that were formed in the 19th century came an ever-increasing flood of governing rules, regulations and laws. At first the laws were few in number and small in scope and were not strictly enforced. But, as the machinery to manage and implement the regulations came into place, the Society found it harder and harder to conform. Infant and child adoption at the Society came under regulation by both the state and local legislatures. There were new standards of cleanliness for the Temporary Home as well as upgraded skill requirements for the children's caretakers. There were also new qualifications for adopting families and new legal guidelines for adoption procedures from both national and state welfare Boards.

Rev. Henry Thompson

Although the Children's Home Society agreed in principle with many of the requirements, it found it difficult to consistently implement them for reasons mentioned previously, and was found to be "deficient in compliance" on several occasions. Specific areas of concern were the physical condition and inadequate records of follow-up of placements, the latter being one of the reasons for Henry Thompson's ultimate downfall.

While Reverend Thompson was a charismatic leader and a man of God, whose vision could lead and inspire others, the success of his work and the future of the Society depended on two factors quite beyond his control, namely his independence and the times in which he lived. Initially there were few legal boundaries in the area of child care, and although Thompson had clearly been given guidelines from the National Federation, he was in reality a pioneer who largely devised his own child placement agency. His theories and practices were indeed laudable, and his considerable talents enabled the successful establishment of his Society. However, his interests and talents were focused on the help he could

give to children, not in the administrative details of the work, the housekeeping aspects of the Temporary Home, or the detailed record keeping requirements of the state supervisors.

Thompson was blunt in his thinking on the latter subject in his report to the Society in 1907.

> *This Society . . . is the only purely voluntary charity in Pennsylvania. Has the state a right to interfere? The state has no more right to be constantly intruding into the work of a chartered voluntary charity than to be constantly intruding into a legalized family home.*

It was ironic that his thoughts, so emphatically expressed, went against so many of the new ideas that he had actually advocated for some time. In the forefront of the social thinking of the day, he had heartily endorsed the passage of new laws regarding adoption as long as they did not "intrude into his work." As mentioned earlier, he was also ahead of his time in the realization that family, not institutional care was best for a child, an idea that formed the very basis of the Children's Home Society. He was forward thinking as well in his insistence on education for the young and for his censure of stigmatizing the illegitimate child. His work in the field was widely recognized, and in 1901 he had been elected delegate to the National Conference of Charities and Corrections held in Washington, D.C.

A major worry to Thompson was the newly attained Home of Temporary Care. Usually under-maintained due to a chronic lack of funds, the home's physical condition was formally criticized several times during Henry Thompson's leadership. Another problem, and probably the most difficult one to correct as well as the most detrimental from a social worker's standpoint, was the inadequate follow-up of the children who had been placed. While Thompson had prided himself on putting his children into well qualified homes, it took more money and more manpower than existed among his trained staff to continue checking on placement outcomes, and the Society was cited a number of times for this lack.

Thompson's record keeping, both of the numbers and status of the children as well as the monies collected and expended, was a source of irritation for the State Board which continued to give the Society black marks. As a result, the Society's Board of Managers, who were legally responsible for adhering to the local and state regulations, found themselves frustrated by Thompson's inability to satisfy the new rules.

Thompson attempted to cooperate as best he could, instituting new methods of handling statistics and complying with requests for audits and new fiscal measures. However, his efforts never seemed to be enough, and he and the Society seemed to be playing a continuous game of "catch-up" with the laws. Accusations of non-compliance by state and local bodies, followed by protestations of innocence or promises of reform, were very much in evidence during Henry Thompson's tenure. Periodically, the Society's Board ordered examinations and audits of the records and books, usually followed by a total exoneration of Thompson and often an official commendation by the Board. This gavotte of "you did" and "no, I didn't" continued until the end of Thompson's long association with the Society, which was to total twenty-five years.

In January 1919 came Thompson's final confrontation with the Welfare Board. A representative requested some specific information from Thompson's files and refused to divulge the names of the "informants" behind his request. Thompson refused access to the files. Then a "committee of three capable women" was appointed by the state to inspect the temporary home. They reported the building in need of repairs and the matron, "obviously of kindly spirit" but without sufficient help. The Society's Board was forced to decide whether to stand by Thompson or to take some definite action in getting rid of the "alleged complaints." Thompson's resignation became effective at the close of the annual meeting of May 13, 1919, and Dr. Andrew M. Shea was chosen as his acting successor.

A Time of Introspection

During the next fifteen years the Society continued its work with the needy children of Pennsylvania despite some difficulties involving compliance and financial matters. It knew that its mission to serve was a necessary one and was carried out as well as possible in very difficult times.

The Society had several problem areas with which to deal during the years between 1919 and 1934 when it began its reorganization. One was the state's impatience with the Society's continuing non-compliance with new laws on child placement; the other, even more troublesome, was its financial status which was exacerbated by the unstable economy of the time. The Society could not get out from under a constant burden of indebtedness even in the prosperity of the postwar years, and the depression years of the 30's that followed only worsened the debts.

As has been mentioned, the Society was founded in times of a large population of children on the streets. Their numbers, however, slowly and steadily dwindled until, in June 1924, it was noted that:

> *We have many more families that want children than we have to give.*

With the onset of the depression the trend reversed, and a flood of homeless children descended upon the Society. Its inability to turn away any of those needing care brought even more financial problems to the Society. The number of children needing care increased well into the 30's. With the end of the depression the equilibrium again slowly changed to the ratio which has remained, that of many more families waiting to adopt children than children available.

Andrew Shea, the Board member who had replaced Henry Thompson as acting superintendent, was himself replaced the following year as had been planned. His capable successor C.W. Karns, had been a dedicated worker for the Society, trained in the field. He started off his tenure as superintendent by appointing committees to clarify the records left by Reverend Thompson and getting the Home of Temporary Care put back into shape. He reported at the June 1920 annual meeting that not only had he paid off bills which had been outstanding, but that:

> *Under the new management the home has been transformed. At considerable expense we have removed all the paper from the walls*

and given a coat of paint and varnished the woodwork. The porches have been repaired, the floors painted; the roof gutters and conductors repaired and replaced where necessary.

Those involved with the present Home can easily recognize the early tasks of what is currently called the Facility Planning Committee.

Like Henry Thompson, Superintendent Karns was a man ahead of his time in his firm belief that a family home was not only the best place for a child but a necessity. This continuity of purpose in the Home's mission, the similarity in thinking and goals of the early leaders, set a clearly defined course for the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society to follow. Today's Children's Home of Pittsburgh reflects these early goals.

Also like Henry Thompson, Karns felt that he was an underdog in his fight with the establishment within the state to shape child placement practices, and many of the Board minutes and annual reports contained lengthy examples of both men's attempts to convince those in favor of institutionalizing children of the value of the Society's thinking. In 1920, after a year at the helm of the Society, Karns noted that those whose opinions differed from his "by now are realizing that our work is supplemental and helpful to their own." He was quoted as saying:

In a series of articles in **The Ladies Home Journal** *last spring , it was written that the billions of dollars that have been spent for mortar and brick for institutional houses rather than on natural homes for children would have subsidized every child in a home of its own or some good family until his sixteenth birthday.*

He also spoke of how the Society's work must be financed through "constant gatherings in the fields," as the Society had not state support or endowment "to speak of." Karns also displayed his professional knowledge when he stated that he wanted:

Regular re-visits by the same person. Next to having a good worker is the advantage of continuing the same worker in the same field.

New Policies and Personnel

Realizing that the Society's lack of workers was a detriment to its efforts, the Board began to bring "new blood" into the Society and hired additional missionaries for the field. Among those were Marion Groff, Katherine Hawley, and Mrs. Maher. Several years later, Edith Miehle was hired to work in the eastern part of the state, as was Miss Anna E. Kindt. Of these workers only Miss Kindt stayed longer than a few years. Serving as district heads until the demise of the Society were Anna Weissflogg, Charles Bobb and George Lockhart. The Reverend Benjamin P. White, who had been with them since the beginning, was promoted to Field Secretary. His duties were to:

> *Solicit funds, find homes for our children and represent us at conferences, synods and presbyteries.*

Other workers included Miss Sarah Smith who, with Blanche Gibson as nurse assistant, replaced Mrs. Thompson as Matron of the Home of Temporary Care. Andrew Kirk, M.D. of East Liberty was another name of long-standing with the Society who served as doctor and examiner to the children from the earliest years. After Dr. Kirk resigned in 1912, when the move to Edgewood was too far away from his regular practice, J.T. Pender, M.D. took his place and stayed for ten years.

The first mention of the Society's adding infants to those children in its care occurred in the previously quoted minutes of the 1920 Annual Meeting in which Superintendent Karns expressed the need for a trained woman to care for babies, saying that:

> *We are many times called upon to care for a number of babies. It is absolutely imperative that better provisions be made at the Home to care for these children temporarily.*

Henry Thompson had seen many infants in need of care, but he thought the job was too difficult for the Society to do properly. All indications from the records are that the majority of the Society's wards ranged in age from four to thirteen years, and the above notations from the minutes are the first mention made of anyone especially hired to take care of infants.

Probably the clearest example of policy change after Thompson left was a petition request in 1922 from the Society's Board to the state legislature for support. State aid, with all its ramifications of supervision and interference, had been an anathema to Henry Thompson. However, with Thompson gone and the financial

picture still bleak, the Board obviously thought it best to find help wherever it could and formed a Budget Committee in January 1923 to estimate expenses and "to see about loans."

A financial statement from 1922 showed that the Society's income was about equal to expenditures, each totalling $41,000. However, the Society had an indebtedness of just under $10,000, one-fourth of which was owed to local merchants, the remainder to the workers for salaries. It was this indebtedness that finally became unmanageable to the Society.

During the next four years, the Board made several requests to the legislature. The first was for $50,000, which was refused by Governor Pinchot. The Board submitted again, and finally in 1927 the Society received a two-year appropriation of $625 every quarter. This sum was not sufficient however, and requesting another appropriation the next year for $25,000, the Society received another $187.50 quarterly, making a total income from the state in 1928 of $3,250.

Mrs. H. Fred Mercer

A stroke of good luck occurred in 1923 when Mrs. H. Fred Mercer joined the Board of Managers. She and her husband, a lawyer, were instrumental in keeping the Society afloat during the next hard years, although Mr. Mercer himself never joined the Board. Obviously possessing administrative skills, Mrs. Mercer was quickly put on the Executive Committee. One of her first suggestions to help with financial woes was:

> *That a quarterly bulletin be published, with various cuts of our Home and our workers, and sent to those friendly and who would advance our cause.*

Mrs. Mercer also suggested printing a pamphlet to distribute among directors and field workers of the Society containing the Constitution, a summary of the Superintendent's Annual Report and a report of contributions to date. Her ideas planted the seeds for the Home's current newsletter, *The Cribsheet*.

The Society already had a publication called *To the Rescue*, which was written and published by Superintendent Thompson. The earliest existing copy, however, is dated 1926, so perhaps in the flurry of Thompson's leaving, it had stopped being published. There is no record of any other bulletin put out by the Society.

Financial and Other Woes

The concern with finances was to continue for some time. In January of 1923, the Executive Committee authorized the Board to borrow $1,500 while at the same time cutting the Superintendent's salary by $25 per month. Later that year in an effort to get closer to the problem, the Board requested a monthly statement of all worker's activities, their expenses and collections.

Another sign of distress was the fact that Executive Committee meetings were held each month in the winter of 1924-25 instead of the twice yearly previous pattern. The discussions all focused on finances and indebtedness. In January 1925, a second mortgage of $12,000 on the Edgewood house was applied for to "centralize" the indebtedness. However, only $9,000 of that was approved, with $5,000 used toward the existing mortgage and the balance used to pay off approximately $3,500 in operating debt. In June of the same year, Board Treasurer Elmer E. Harter was unanimously elected Superintendent of the Society at a yearly salary of $3,600, and the Reverend Karns was retired back to the field as a worker.

Reverend Harter later recounted that in 1925 when he was elected Superintendent of the Society, he found the organization $21,000 in debt, with $18,000 of that for maintenance. Reverend Harter also discovered, much to his dismay, that there were:

> *Notes, nine of them, scattered all over the state, totaling about $10,000, which had to be renewed every three months.*

The money to renew these notes had to come from somewhere, and it was decided to take it from the workers' salaries, issuing notes in lieu of payment. At the same time, the workers were being encouraged to increase their collections for the Society. Finally, the dedicated but hard-pressed workers apparently rebelled, according to the Board minutes, and increased their requests for salary raises.

Probably the most serious problem for the Society was its relationship with both the Welfare Society of Pittsburgh and the Welfare Society of Pennsylvania. While there are no records of specific accusations, a paragraph in the minutes of the January 1925 Semi-Annual Meeting refers to this relationship as the probable cause for the retirement of Mr. Karns. The minutes note that Mary E. Labaree, Director of Children of the Department of Welfare, had addressed a special Board meeting on the subject of "the Home and the work in the field." The minutes also refer to a letter from Mrs. Ellen Potter, from the same department, which was "read and carefully considered paragraph by paragraph." Whatever the con-

cerns were, they were apparently quickly addressed by Mr. Harter who happily reported in his first report to the Society in June 1926 that:

> *We have gained the good will of the state, and the City of Pittsburgh is now open to us through Mr. Mercer.*

Mr. Mercer, while never actually a member of the Board, was to come to the aid of the Society many times. Among other things, he was instrumental in obtaining the state appropriation approved in 1927.

In the same report of June 1926, Harter also admitted that the Society "cannot at this time" make as many visits to the children as suggested by the Department of Welfare. Harter and the Board tried their best to satisfy their detractors, state as well as financial, and in two years time succeeded to the extent that the Society, back in the good graces of the Welfare Department, was invited to enroll in the state Federation of Welfare at Reading, Pennsylvania. The City of Pittsburgh also followed with an invitation to join the local Federation of Welfare Societies.

By this time, the Society had improved its placement practices by investigating appeals more carefully and cutting back on the number of children received. However, it was in a double bind, as Harter mentioned in the 1929 Annual Report; due to the additional time given to casework and to the visitations of homes and children, there was less time available for solicitations of money.

For a while, it seemed as though income was increasing. In 1926, the society received $7,500 from the sale of the two extra lots adjoining the Home in Edgewood. This sum was "applied to the indebtedness." Tag Day was re-instituted as the Welfare Department of the city granted a permit for November 6, 1926. Donation Day, the other major source of contributions, also was held successfully each year. The state appropriation of $600 was received every three months and would increase to $800 in 1928. By October 1927, times were good enough that a "little of the indebtedness every month" was being paid off from income termed "disposable."

The missionaries' collections, however, were still the major source of income to the Society and amounted to at least fifty percent of the total. In light of this, it is clear just how important the field workers were to the Society. They not only did the actual work with the children, but also provided a substantial part of the money that subsidized the operations. In May 1929, the illness of two important workers, Mrs. Lloyd and Dr. White, caused a considerable financial decline for the Society, emphasizing not only its enormous dependence on the workers, but also its fiscal fragility.

Merry Christmas

The Pittsburgh Press

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1936

Dear Santa:

"We have dolls and rattles and blocks, so please, Santa Claus, bring us something other little girls and boys have and we don't.

"Bring us real mamas and papas for Christmas—a set apiece for our very own. We come in ages from three months to three years. Some of us are creepers. Some toddlers. We have blue, brown and gray eyes. Our hair is dark and blond, straight and curly. We laugh and cry, like other babies. And we're all healthy.

So Santa, if you run across any sad couples who want babies like us in their homes, don't forget us—nine of us. We won't ask for anything else, if we get mamas and papas of our own."

NINE UNWANTED BABIES,
Children's Home of Pittsburgh.

The Children's Home of Pittsburgh, South Negley Ave., founded 39 years ago as an adoption home has an efficient board. Members, shown here, are Mrs. Howard Samson, Mrs. James C. Bradley, Mrs. H. Fred Mercer, Miss Lydia Cypher (all standing) and Mrs. G.R. Gellatly.

The Women of the Board

The women of the Board played a significant role in the early operations of the Society. However, the women's part of the Board, which in reality ran the Society, was seldom mentioned in the minutes. Their reports, which were not typed and bound as were the directors', have been lost. This loss is unfortunate since the womens' activities were of great importance, and their records would provide insights into details of child care in the Society's earlier days.

If the men's Board was largely advisory and financial in its focus, the women were indeed the heart and soul of the Society. They had the responsibility of the Home's vital function of child care which entailed the management of the Home of Temporary Care, assisting the Matron on both a regular and emergency basis, and knowing and responding to the children in the Home's care. A secondary responsibility, but a significant one, was to augment the Society's income. This they did through parties, benefits and every conceivable sort of fundraiser.

With the coming of Reverend Harter as Superintendent, the women's Board of Managers was given greater acknowledgement and credit. In his first report to the Annual Meeting in 1926, Harter gave the first recorded public acknowledgement of the ladies' efforts by mentioning that the garden party held by the House Committee in June had netted almost $800. He also gave considerable thanks to Mrs. Mercer for the painting of the house, for the donation of an upright piano for the parlor, and for steel office files. Mr. Harter also thanked his wife, Priscilla, for her work as Matron of the Home, a position she alternated with Sarah Smith due to her own precarious health.

In subsequent Board meetings, Mr. Harter again praised the Managers' work. He cited Mrs. Mercer and Mrs. Gerst as "leaders in popularizing our work" and paid tribute to Mrs. Henry K. Holmes, Mrs. C. Bradley Gibson and Mrs. S.B. Heppenstall. He also cited the various organizations who had donated to and maintained the Home's nurseries. These acknowledgements demonstrated that Elmer Harter, more than his predecessors, realized the value of willing volunteers from not only his own board but from other groups as well.

467 South Aiken Avenue was purchased in 1930 and sold in 1969 to Don Allen Chevrolet for a parking lot.

A New Home

The Home in Edgewood on Pennwood Street, which had been purchased in 1912, began to show some wear by the mid-20's. A generous gift from H. Fred Mercer in June 1929 of a farm valued at $12,000, "located near the Butler and Allegheny County lines," was to make possible the acquisition a year later of the next Home of Temporary Care.

By then the old facility had indeed seen better days. The furnace, a gift of James McCairns some years earlier, was failing again, and the Board, feeling that the deteriorating condition of the property did not justify additional maintenance expenses, had let the house fall into disrepair. Buoyed by a $3,000 bequest from the estate of Anna Kerr in 1929, the Board was hopeful that a new and larger Home could be purchased.

A Search Committee was formed in September 1929 and instructed to find a facility that was closer to the city. The committee quickly found just what it wanted in Highland Park, and applied to the City Council Zoning Commission to purchase the West property on Wellesley Road near Heberton Avenue. That property was never purchased, however. Six months went by before the committee found a satisfactory replacement at 467 South Aiken Avenue, just north of Baum Boulevard. The purchase price of $30,000 was detailed in the minutes:

> *Mr. Mercer will give $12,000 toward the payment of the purchase price, a mortgage of $15,000 would be assumed by the party from whom the property is to be purchased, and the balance of $3,000 should be raised by the Board for payment at such time as may be determined.*

The old Home in Edgewood was offered for sale to Mr. Clyde C. Lemon for $10,500. To help with the cleaning and renovating of the new Home, the Search Committee sent out a special appeal which brought in $1,466.50. Other decorating and furnishing was provided by Board members and various organizations, and on June 20, 1930, thirty-one children of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society moved into their new quarters on South Aiken Avenue.

It was a comfortable house that the Board had found, with a large front porch where the nurses rocked the babies, and a smaller porch and yard in back where laundry and diapers could be hung. The layout was typical of a Pittsburgh center hall house, with the Social Service office and kitchen on the left, the living and dining rooms on the right.

To this day, it is remembered with great fondness by Board members, some of whom had parents actively involved at the time. Mitzi Ridall recalls:

> *It was a little square house, with a porch with spokes and wooden steps sort of wobbly. Inside was a wonderful old brown wooden staircase to the second floor. Chester [LeMaistre] made some lamps out of four of those spindles when we moved [in 1969] and they're in the present Children's Home living room today. There was a window seat in the dining room where we would sit at meetings, and you could hear the cars on Baum Boulevard as we would be talking . . . we would come in the back door through the kitchen. There were about four parking spaces in the back, and we were always scrambling for space. The basement was where Homecoming was held . . . I remember how impressive that was my first year in 1962.*

Catherine Helbling, R.N., in charge of the nursery from 1963 on, has remembered:

> *My office was half-way up the stairs on the landing, with an old desk and file cabinet. It was a beautiful house, with oak paneling and stained glass windows, and a porch where nurses swung the babies in good weather. There was a sleep-in room upstairs where nurses could stay if they had to; it was also used for adoptive parents visiting. The nurseries were glassed-in . . . one room held babies two months old . . . the older babies up to six months were on the left across from the sleeping room. We had room for 12-14 babies. Then there was an isolation room where babies were kept for a week or so when they first came into the Home.*

The donation of furnishings and equipment for the new Home by other charitable groups was a common practice of the times, when tangible items were often given in lieu of cash. In each case, a member of the Board of Managers served as the link between the organizations; Kaednege was represented by Mrs. Gerst, National Park Seminary by Mrs. Holmes, and Briarcliff by Mrs. Gibson.

The rooms were not only furnished by the different groups, but also were maintained by them, and each room bore the name of its charitable donor. These organizations were quite generous to the Children's Home Society. National Park Seminary, in addition to furnishing and maintaining a room, paid $50 a month regularly toward the grocery bill. The Kaednege Society was in charge of the infirmary as well as another large room on the third floor. It also contributed food, linens and clothing to the Home. The Briarcliff Alumnae Association was responsible for a room, and had individual members who contributed cash, food and clothing.

The Society's own Board members were equally generous. Mrs. Mercer, for one, furnished, prepared and maintained the nursery in the South Aiken Avenue Home. Food was a common gift; one member provided meat every Wednesday, another donated butter. Many other local organizations gave to the Home throughout the depression years. Among them were the Junior Guild of Pittsburgh, the Needlework Association of Wilkinsburg Presbyterian Church, as well as other needlework associations throughout the state, the Regent Square Women's Club, and the women's Bible classes of various churches.

Crises and Reorganization

If the hopes of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society reached a high point in June 1930 with the long awaited purchase of its very own home, they were dashed a mere six months later when in January 1931 it was reported at an Executive Committee meeting that the Society had emerged from its exhilarating real estate transactions with an indebtedness of $8,550. The Superintendent was subsequently asked to "supply the total sources of the debt," and six months later, the Finance Committee was authorized to negotiate a loan for $2,500 and raise the mortgage from $15,000 to $20,000. There was also a discussion of reducing salaries and wages. It is not recorded whether reductions actually took place except in the cases of the student nurses in the newly initiated program in which the rationale was that "hospitals are also canceling those salaries."

In the Annual Report of 1932 Mr. Harter revealed that:

> *Miss Liveright, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Welfare Association, has found fault with our work . . . we don't have enough workers. Our children should be visited four times a year. We have said that we would be glad to comply as far as financially able.*

Board members Mrs. Gertrude Gellatly, Dr. Ellsmer Piper and the Reverend Cridland, who had been appointed as a committee to study the total financial picture of the Society, reported that:

> *Balancing the budget is an impossibility because of the present uncertainty of income and increasing number of petitions for care of children.*

The committee also reported that after careful examination of expenses and receipts they found a cash shortfall of some $4,000, and they recommended the immediate raising of a fund of $50,000, a sum which was to cover $15,000 for the mortgage, $16,000 for the "maintenance of the indebtedness," and $19,000 to attain the minimum state requirements. That $50,000 was never raised.

In 1933 the Society was sued by its purveyor, Behrhorst and Company for $135.79. The Society paid in monthly installments of $50, but was again threatened with another suit by Behrhorst for $7.90, which had been the sum paid to the collecting alderman and deducted from the monies given. The Board settled the bill to "avoid unpleasantness that might arise."

Perhaps a financial low point was reached in September 1933 when the

Treasurer moved that the Directors "individually assume certain bills that have been long past due," and parceled them out for payment. These dozen or so bills ranged from $15 to over $100, for a total of $689.05.

In November 1933 an Executive Committee meeting was called to discuss problems with the Orphans' Court. A court investigator had called Board president Reverend Skillington, requesting that the Society cooperate with the judges of the Court in the adoption of children. This investigator had complained that on two occasions when visiting Superintendent Harter's office, she had been refused information she had requested. Mr. Harter subsequently denied the allegations at a Board meeting two months later, saying that he had indeed given the above investigator all proper information. He did move, however, that the Society cooperate with the Court to the utmost degree possible. It is interesting to note that at the close of that same meeting in January 1934, the Secretary Protem read that:

> *Mrs. Elmer E. Harter, as Matron of the Receiving Home of the Children's Home Society of Pennsylvania, has tendered her resignation to the Superintendent (her husband) effective June 30, 1934. E.E. Harter, State Superintendent, also resigned, effective same date.*

Harter was magnanimous and polite as he give a history of his time with the Society. He recounted the good that had been done, discussed the recent hard years, and thanked the Board and various others for favors and services rendered. In only one sentence did he reveal his emotions to say that he felt that the Board was more "interested in finances than in the work done." He concluded by stating that:

> *I have done the best I could, considering the times through which we all have passed.*

At the February Executive Committee meeting, a month later, it was decided to cut even more expenses, including Mr. Harter's salary to $200 a month, since his actual retirement was still six months away. Other reductions included the extra telephone, the size of the Society's *To the Rescue* publication, and even the cost of the laundry work. Also at this same meeting an apparently negative letter was read from a state welfare official, prompting the committee to vote that:

> *No action on this report be taken until a special meeting has been called to consider the advisability of keeping the Home open.*

This is the first recorded reference to a possible closing of the Home.

The following months saw an exchange of correspondence between the Society and the State Welfare Commission which detailed specific complaints of the regulators and the replies from the Society. An April 17, 1934 letter from Mrs. Liveright, the State Secretary of Welfare, to Dr. Skillington, the President of the Society at the time, stated that there had been violations of the law in the Society's ignoring certain state guidelines in placing children. The letter requested that the Society accept no more children for care until "some plan for good casework service has been worked out."

In response, Mrs. Bradley, the Chairman of the Board's Welfare Committee, cited the financial plight of the Society. Mrs. Liveright, in turn, replied that:

> *To our mind, it is better to do no work at all, if finances do not allow good work, than to carry on a large and extensive work of mediocre quality.*

She then went on to say that the criticism of the Society was not based solely on recent visits of her representative, but was the culmination of ten years of field representative reports of criticisms "still pertinent."

The May 1934 Executive Committee immediately addressed these significant charges by adopting a resolution stating that the Society intended to adapt its work as quickly as possible to conform to the standards and requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. The committee also requested for the following meeting that the Superintendent furnish a list of all the children currently under care, their locations, and information as to the revenues from the counties from which the State Welfare Department had suggested the Society withdraw.

In June, the Executive Committee dealt with the reality of the situation and followed the plan devised by the Children's Aid Society of Eastern Pennsylvania which stated that all the Society's children "east of the Alleghenies" be henceforth cared for by the separate counties under the Aid Society's jurisdiction.

It took another year and a half before all the specifics and legalities of dissolution of the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society could be accomplished. On October 16, 1935 at a special meeting, it was stated formally that the indebtedness of $30,000 was too great to pay off and that reorganization was to be considered. It was also resolved that:

1. The Society would henceforth be called The Children's Home of Pittsburgh.
2. It would be an adoption center, free from state obligation.

3. Liquidation trustees were to take over assets for benefit of the creditors, said assets to be distributed pro rata among the existing creditors.
4. The present property at 467 South Aiken Avenue in Shadyside would be rented from the trustees.

Having made the decision to liquidate and reorganize, the Society saw to the orderly transfer of its children's records by sending them to the Philadelphia Children's Aid Society, with letters going to foster parents of the children to notify them of the transfer. It also set up a structure to operate essentially in the city of Pittsburgh, and took the necessary steps to conform to the new state rules. The moves made in this transition period were systematic, definite and legally correct, and in this way was the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society removed from the morass of years of financial and regulatory disorder.

On June 8, 1936 the "Organization Meeting of The Children's Home of Pittsburgh" was called to order.

PART II
A NEW BEGINNING
1936 - 1993

Changes

With the reorganization came new bylaws, changes in staff and Board membership, and most important, a scope of operation limited solely to the Pittsburgh area for the newly formed Children's Home of Pittsburgh.

The changes really started in June 1934 with the departure of Elmer Harter and his wife. Upon Mr. Harter's leaving, the position of Superintendent was eliminated, and the President of the Board of Directors assumed those duties. The children were continued to be cared for by young student nurses in a recently instituted program. One of the nurses at the Home, Mrs. J.R. Farrell, took over as Matron. Her duties were spelled out by the Board, with a strong emphasis on record keeping, as a reaction to the criticism of the previous Matron's performance by the State Welfare Board. Mrs. Farrell's duties as described in the minutes were to:

> *Keep lists of members [the children], keep the (financial) accounts, purchase supplies approved by the Executive Committee, and keep records of all admissions and placements.*

She was to be given a petty cash fund of $100, with all expenditures over $1 to be shown by receipt. Clearly, the Board wanted to keep a tighter rein.

Mrs. Harter returned as Matron in 1938 when the Board, apparently feeling they had been too harsh with her, reconsidered their decision. Her duties were reduced to supervision of the Home's domestic affairs such as housekeeping and meal planning. She left within two years. Nell Frazier Teslovich, who started as a student nurse in 1940, recalls that Mrs. Harter:

Nell Frazier Teslovich

> *Had health problems, and they eased her out. It broke her heart that she could no longer work with the children . . . she had been there for many, many years.*

Mrs. Teslovich, who continued at the Home for many years, and became known as Mrs. T., described Mrs. Harter as a "buxom, warm person . . . very motherly."

With Mrs. Harter's leaving, the position of Matron was eliminated, and the women of the Board of Managers took over the management of the Home. A social worker, Frances Eiseman, was put in charge of adoptions, court matters and legal papers. These changes were according to the new Constitution and

bylaws instituted in 1939 that brought the Children's Home into line with the practices of the day. Mrs. Eiseman had been a field worker in Superintendent Harter's day and was the last vestige of the old Children's Home Society of Pennsylvania. When she left in 1950, the last traces of an era went with her.

In addition to the changes that occurred in 1936 which were mandated by the new bylaws, there were other more subtle modifications of the Board of Directors which stemmed from a determination to correct the mistakes of the old Society. One of the Board's first moves was to recruit new members from the leading families of the Pittsburgh financial and social community. In this way, as they were trying to alleviate the on-going plight of under-financing, they could at the same time promote the Home and its work among the more influential members of the Pittsburgh business and social world.

The elimination under the new bylaws of the non-working honorary vice presidents, who were mostly ministers and citizens from other large Pennsylvania cities, also changed the composition of the Board. Since the new Children's Home was to operate solely in the city of Pittsburgh, the old ties with other cities became less important, and were thus dissolved formally.

Other changes were reflected in the attention paid to the duties of the Board officers and committee heads. These duties were outlined in much greater detail than before. The new focus on finance was evidenced by the formation of new standing committees: the General Fund Committee, Special Fund Committee, and a Committee for Investment of Funds. All the areas that had previously been ignored or badly run by the old Society were given emphasis in the organizational changes, including fundraising, working with the State Welfare Boards, and public relations.

The need to better inform the public about the Children's Home was stated when the Board described the newly organized agency as "an adoption center, free of state obligation, with advertising needed." Use of the word "advertising" reflected the Board's realization of the importance and necessity of making the organization known in the community, not only for its work but for its need for funds for that work. A common complaint from early days was, "Why doesn't the public know who we are?" In 1912 when the Society bought its first house in Edgewood, a request was noted in the Board minutes for a bigger, more prominently displayed sign in front. This request was repeated in the reorganization meeting minutes in 1936 as a suggestion "to have a lighted sign on the front lawn."

This promotional poster was designed by the well-known local cartoonist Cy Hungerford.

Characters • Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1950

There were only sporadic efforts made to publicize the work of the Children's Home prior to 1936 when, aware of the value of publicity, the Board formed a committee to handle it. As was the custom in the 40's and 50's, charitable organizations gained the most exposure through the society columns of the local newspapers. Features on The Children's Home Tag Day, for example, became an annual event in the newspapers, with the actual work of the Home given somewhat less attention than the "socially prominent" women involved. Pictures of the babies were always attention-getters, and the Home could count on at least one or two large feature stories in the Pittsburgh Press Roto section each year during the decades of the 40's and 50's. There were thoughtful articles written about the Home as well, discussing adoption issues, the decrease in adoptable infants and changing adoption laws. Florence Fisher Parry, a local columnist of the day, periodically wrote of the Home's adoption program, usually in the larger context of national adoption trends.

It was not until 1987, however, that the Children's Home hired a professional Community Relations Director to handle the agency's publicity.

Sally Humphrey, Board member and Chairman of the first charity golf tournament in 1985, with radio personality Jack Bogut, Honorary Chairman.

In 1989, Mario Lemieux (center) of the Pittsburgh Penguins hockey team served as Honorary Chairman of the annual golf event. Board members Jim Wolf and Peggy Douglass were Co-Chairmen.

The Search for Funding

The focus on attaining financial stability for the Home's operations did not diminish after its reorganization from the Pennsylvania Children's Home Society to the Children's Home of Pittsburgh. If anything, efforts in this area increased.

Over the years, there had been debates over the advisability of establishing fees for adoptive couples with whom the Home placed infants. It seemed to be the consensus that the Home would be able to raise more money from the community if the public knew that the Home charged no fees for its services. Nothing more formal was ever done than a request to adopting parents to "think of the Home at Christmas time," or to "include the Home on your list of charitable organizations." It was not until 1978, about forty years after the reorganization, that a fee structure for adoptions was established. Similar thinking was behind the Home's not joining the Community Chest and other organized "umbrella funds." Now, however, the Donor Option Plan of the United Way, available only in recent years, is a substantial source of income for the agency.

The question of "How do we get more money?" indeed was a pressing one from the 1930's on. Many avenues were explored and debated, and many suggestions made and discarded, one of which was having a refreshment stand at the Syria Mosque in Oakland. Many successful ideas were carried out, from designing and selling greeting cards to publishing cookbooks. One of the greatest successes occurred in 1946 when a car donated by Howard Samson, President of the Board netted $14,000 in a raffle.

Board members' involvements in outside activities often generated funding for the Home. Howard Samson, as newly elected president of the Western Pennsylvania Kennel Association, arranged to have the Home be the official beneficiary of the Annual Dog Show. In 1957 the substantial sum of $2,000 was donated, and in subsequent years the Home received as much as $6,000. The "Bow-Wow Pow-Wow," the annual dinner/dance of the 60's, was another collaboration between the WPKA and the Home. Today the Kennel Association continues to be a loyal and supportive friend of the Children's Home.

Board members were also instrumental in establishing the Home's annual charity golf tournament. First held in 1985 at Fox Chapel Golf Club and in more recent years at the Pittsburgh Field Club, the event has proven to be immensely

popular and successful, with the 1991 proceeds approaching $30,000. While the financial rewards of this tournament have been great, the involvement of large members of individuals from the community, serving as members of the planning committee or as active participants in the event, has added to its stature as a significant fundraiser.

In 1990 the Children's Home received considerable financial support as well as media coverage when it was the recipient of the proceeds from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette SEEN Party, a gala affair held annually and hosted by the newspaper's SEEN columnist, Jim Richardson. The elegant event, held at the Vista Hotel, attracted over 600 and raised nearly $33,000. Elin Roddey, a Board member also active in many other community organizations, served as Honorary Chairman and was instrumental in arranging the SEEN/Children's Home partnership. In addition to the financial and publicity benefits which resulted from the party, the Home widened its circle of friends through the involvement of many members from the community who served on the planning committee.

An organization which has been financially supportive of the Home has been Children's Home Adoptive Parents (CHAP). CHAP was established in the 70's as a result of the affection and gratitude held by adoptive parents for Rena Hohosh, who held the position of director from 1956 to 1978. Known to many as "Mrs. Children's Home," Mrs. Hohosh is remembered fondly by many parents who received infants during her tenure. The fundraisers sponsored by CHAP have included bake sales and greeting card sales. In addition, CHAP members have volunteered time for fundraising phonathons and assisting the annual adoption Homecoming event. The group has also held social events over the years, most notably the annual Christmas Party and a day at Kennywood Park.

Local foundations and corporations also have provided financial support for the Home for many years, beginning in the 50's when the Board began to explore these valuable community resources through Stanton Balfour of the Pittsburgh Foundation. Today the Home continues to receive gifts and donations from the business and foundation community. One of the first foundations to fund the Home regularly was the Pittsburgh Foundation through its Milk and Ice Fund.

The largest source of income, however, has always come from the Home's Annual Appeal Campaign. This most effective fundraising effort began with informal personal solicitations by Board members. Started by the women of the old

Home Society in 1919, the Appeal took many forms. As with many phases of activity at the Home, Board involvement has played a key role in the success of the Annual Appeal which has evolved from informal, sporadic measures into an organized and professional campaign directed by a Development Committee and a professional development staff. It has grown from notes between friends on an irregular basis, originally at times of crisis, to a well-ordered, systematic yearly drive which in recent years has brought in over $100,000 to offset operating expenses. In 1983, the challenge of a $1,000,000 Capital Campaign justified the hiring of the Home's first Director of Development, Maureen Sweeny, to continue the Home's ninety-year effort to obtain operating funds. Since that time, the Department of Development at the Home, working closely still with a Board committee, has succeeded in increasing contributions to the Home from an ever-broadening constituency of donors.

Tag Day was another earlier successful fundraising endeavor, first mentioned in the Board minutes of 1922. Mrs. Fred Mercer noted in 1929 that "Tag Day was exhausting, as usual, but rewarding. "The Children's Home Tag Day became particularly popular in the 40's and 50's when many organizations held similar street solicitations. By the 1940's, the Home's tag flower of choice was the Marigold, which had become the Home's symbol. In an all out effort, once a year the women of the Board stationed themselves in strategic spots throughout downtown Pittsburgh, East Liberty and Shadyside. Decorated with a banner across their chests identifying the Children's Home, they handed out Marigolds in exchange for cash donations. Board member Mrs. Paul Hardy is remembered as having pinned the Home's banner on her volunteers in such a way that only *"CHILDREN'S HO . . "* showed, hoping that it would be seen as the better known Children's Hospital and presumably generate more donations!

In 1952 Marigold Day and Donation Day accounted for fifty percent of the Home's budget which at that time was $25,000. The money raised by Tag Day hit its peak in 1953 with $14,500, a sum never again to be matched. After several years of declining receipts, the Board discontinued the street solicitation, as did most of the other organizations around the city.

Donation Day, the Home's other major source of funding, was started in the early days of the organization and was the formal expression of the philanthropy of the times when people, reluctant to throw anything away, contributed tangible

Mrs. Phillip Courtney Hodill and Mrs. Walter A. Scott, general chairman, distributed supplies and checked posters for the Home's annual Tag Day.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, September 30, 1950

TAGGERS— Helping with the sale of marigolds today, to aid the Children's Home of Pittsburgh on South Aiken Avenue, will be the group of three. Center is Mrs. George W. Stewart, one of the chairmen of the day's activities. At left is Mrs. Edgar F. Cosgrove, a director of the sale in East Liberty, and at right, Mrs. George I. Harter.

items to charity. Usually held near the Christmas holidays, Donation Day was an organized means for Board members and friends to bring contributions to the Home in the form of sheets, canned goods, diapers, baby clothes, and anything else that the Home could use. It was also a good source of income totaling several thousand dollars each year. Cash donations were strictly informal, however and it was inferred that if one could not attend the actual Donation Day Tea, one could send a check! As the years went on, the day evolved into more of a reunion of adoptive parents and their children, and the practice of bringing gifts, other than cookies, declined. The name was changed to "Tea Day," later to become "Homecoming" as it is now known.

Hostesses at Tea Day included Board members Phyllis Andrews, Mitzi Ridall, Janey Follansbee and Marge Riviere.

Board members Mary G. Walker, Bill Wycoff and Lisa Kennedy.

The annual Homecoming evolved from more the formal Tea Day. Festivities have become more informal over the years.

Homecoming

Homecoming has remained one of the most meaningful traditions held annually over the years at the Children's Home. Mentioned earlier as having evolved from Donation Day, for some time it was known as Tea Day.

This day, in addition to providing some revenue for the Home, served as a time for adoptive families and their children to return year after year to see the Home and each other. It was, in its early years, a rather formal, social day, with Board members acting as hostesses to as many as five hundred guests during the afternoon. During the 1920's, Mrs. Mercer was a frequent hostess, as were Mrs. E.B. Gellatly in the 40's and Mrs. Mary Scott in the 50's. Tea and punch were served with cookies brought by the Board members, and Mary Walker's petit fours became yearly favorites. Everyone pitched in, especially Phyllis Andrews, Janey Follansbee, Sally Fownes, Diney Walrath and Mitzi Ridall. Phyllis recalls:

Mrs. E.B. Gellatly

> *Janey Follansbee and Mitzi Ridall would take over the kitchen, seeing to the punch and cookies. May Lyons and Margaret, the kitchen helpers, would just have to move over.*

For weeks before the event, volunteers would sit around the dining room table, whether it was in Edgewood, on South Aiken Avenue or Kentucky Avenue, to personalize the printed invitations and to stuff and address the envelopes.

As the donations slowed over the years, the most important aspect of the day grew to be the reunion with the adoptive parents, their children, the Home, and its staff. In the early 1970's, the name of the event was changed to the more fitting and descriptive "Homecoming."

During the years when there was a nursery which housed the infants waiting to be adopted, the returning children would go up with their parents to view the tiny cribs where they had once slept. Sally Fownes remembers that:

> *Many of the relatives would come too. The children were always dressed up, and the parents were always so happy to show off their children and to see one another again. It was a special time for bonding . . . with each other and the Home.*

The day was special as well for the many Board members who had served as volunteers in the nursery to rock and feed the babies. They too basked in the warm glow of reunion with those babies and their adoptive families.

Although the adoption nursery closed in 1982 with the change in the adoption program to utilize foster homes, Homecoming continues to attract the Home's loyal families who are eager to show their children where they first "met." The attendees range from tiny infants through preteens, with grandparents, aunts and uncles, and supportive friends.

Held in recent years on a Sunday afternoon in September, Homecoming festivities have become more informal, centering around a theme and incorporating appealing decorations such as teddy bears, clowns, and Mickey Mouse. Activities for young children are planned throughout the Home, including face painting and cookie decorating, and in some years there has been a drawing "contest" for the year's greeting card designs. In 1991 a petting zoo was located in the parking lot, enabling many of the festivities to go on outdoors. Despite the changes, the feelings of love and warmth which have characterized this special day from its beginnings remain. This sentimental gathering is always a highlight of the year and is looked forward to eagerly each autumn.

The Move to Kentucky Avenue

By the 1950's, the Board of Directors started to feel that they were outgrowing the Home on South Aiken Avenue. However, it was to be almost twenty years until they realized their dream of a custom-built building at Kentucky and Negley in the heart of Shadyside.

The old three-story house on Aiken had begun to look shabby in the prosperity of the post-war years, during which expectations rose in terms of comforts and convenience. The staff at the Home also experienced an unaccustomed lack of space with the baby boom filling the nurseries with more infants than every before. The constant maintenance and stricter fire codes were additional factors which contributed to the Board's desire to find better quarters for its babies.

The first mention in the Board minutes of the possibility of needing a larger building occurred in January 1953. Accompanying this mention was a notation of almost $7,000 spent on improvements and replacements to the Home. The records of the next several years show varying amounts spent on repairs in and out of the building, as well as assorted comments by Board members which reflected exasperation and despair over the Home's condition. Finally, at an Executive Committee meeting in November 1960, Board member Willeen Benedum suggested that serious consideration be given to finding a new home. Two months later, Mrs. Benedum and her husband Paul followed up the suggestion with a leadership gift of $7,000 toward a new site and building for The Children's Home.

The Board was divided about what it wanted, however. Some members thought it best to do serious remodeling on the present house, and others wanted to buy an existing building. The decision was won by another group who wanted to build a new facility. By June 1965, the fund for "Researching Future Building Plans" had grown to $9,000, and architect L. Wolfe donated the first report with a recommendation of a new Home of two- story construction.

By January 1966, the Real Estate Committee of the Board had found four sites to explore: two on Fifth Avenue near South Highland, one on North Dithridge in Oakland, and one at the corner of North Highland and Bryant near Highland Park. For whatever reasons, these sites were not purchased, and J. Harold Authenreith, as head of the committee, was authorized to offer a bid on the land on the corner of Negley and Kentucky Avenues in Shadyside.

Construction on Kentucky Avenue began in the summer of 1968. Local community groups who objected initially were placated by the handsome design of the building.

This lot had originally been part of a larger property, the Ogden Edwards family estate, that once had included the whole block between Ivy, Negley, Fifth and Kentucky Avenues. According to Mary Edwards Foster, mother of a former Board member Polly Mullins, there were three houses on the block: the Lockhart house and two Edwards houses. The larger Edwards house was situated on Fifth Avenue. As a child, Mrs. Foster lived in the smaller one that was closer to Kentucky, on the site of the present Children's Home. That house was later given to her cousin, Mary Edwards Lazear, Ogden's granddaughter.

When Ellis School acquired the whole property in 1947, the smaller house was used as a kindergarten. By that time the Lockhart house had been torn down, and the resulting vacant property on the Ivy Street side became a playing field for the school. The low stone wall, which is still standing on the Negley side of the Home, originally surrounded the entire block. Ellis School sold the property in the late 1950's to Michael Jones, a developer, who subsequently sold the Ivy Street side to a nursing home and developed the Fifth Avenue side into handsome townhouses.

The Children's Home Board offered Mr. Jones $65,000 for the Kentucky Avenue lot, which he accepted with the stipulation that an easement must be granted to the townhouses for their access. He also stipulated that any proposed building must be in Georgian style to harmonize with the townhouses.

John N. Franklin was chosen as architect in August 1966, and he estimated that it would cost $210,000 to build what the Board wanted. His fee of 8-10% was to include complete supervision and engineering. In actuality, the final cost of the building came to more than twice the original estimate. In October 1966, the idea and Franklin's plans were enthusiastically accepted by the Board, and the Executive Committee authorized a goal of $300,000 for the Building Fund Campaign, one-third of which would come from the Board. Included in that amount was to be a cushion of $50,000 for operating expenses.

The enthusiasm for the new building was evidenced by the fact that the entire goal of $300,000 was met by Christmas of that year. However, ground was not broken for another two years, until the summer of 1968, due mainly to zoning problems. Several community groups raised objections, complaining about the "institutional use" of the property and a lack of ordained rear footage. The nursing home next door also initially refused to sign the required zoning variance. These

various "protestors" finally were placated by the handsome design of the building and by the strength of community support, as shown by the $400,000 raised.

Of concern to the Board, in addition to the zoning problems, was a succession of inaccurately low cost estimates and subsequent revisions to the plans by the architect. These resulted in the spiraling cost of the project which entailed marked increases in the Building Fund Campaign goal. Dave Ketchum, an active Board member during that period, cites George McGlaughlin, another Board member, as performing "yeoman work" in protecting the Board's interests during the subsequent negotiations with both architect and builder.

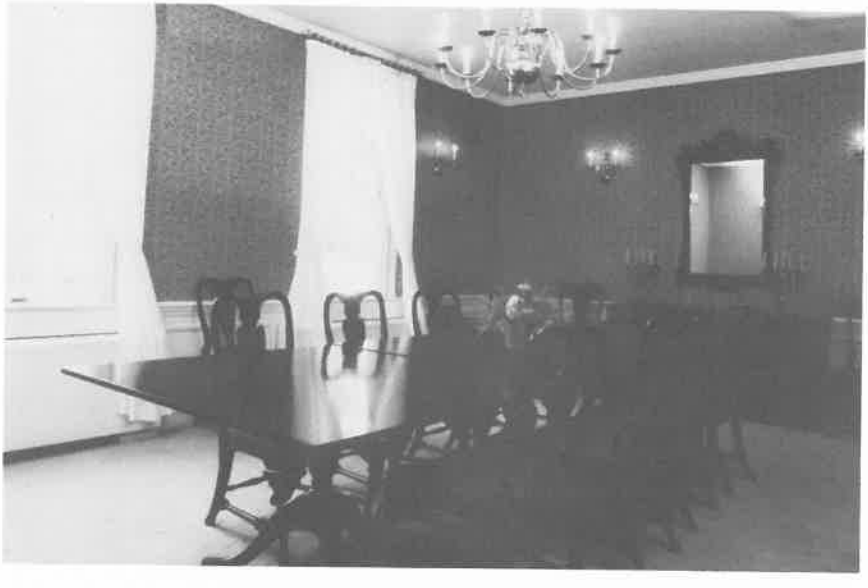
During the Building Fund Campaign, the Board, as always, supported the Home to the utmost as they demonstrated by meeting their pledged third of the goal. As the head of the Campaign, Dave Ketchum worked long and hard, ultimately collecting almost $600,000. He also served as watchdog to keep building expenses down to preserve the cushion for operating expenses. Even with a lot of the "extras" removed, by the July 1968 Board meeting the projected cost of the building had reached $360,000. At that meeting, Hal Authenreith, Chairman of the Building Committee, reiterated Mr. Ketchum's warnings:

> *When we add in fees, landscaping, cost of land, equipment and furnishings, that leaves the operating expense fund at only $10,000.*

Some of the deficits were subsequently made up by a $50,000 grant from the R.K. Mellon Foundation.

In March 1969 the South Aiken house was sold for $32,000 to Don Allen Chevrolet, to become a parking lot the following year, and in the summer of 1969 the Children's Home moved to its new residence on Kentucky Avenue. Almost everyone . . . Board, staff, and adoptive parents . . . rejoiced in their new and spacious facility. Some, however, were uneasy with its gracious style, feeling it might be found too imposing for the mission of the Home and for its clients.

Specifically designed for its services to infants and families, the new Children's Home was at the same time gracious, warm and homelike. The wide entrance hall, the spacious living and dining rooms, the large well-equipped kitchen coexisted harmoniously with nurseries, offices, and live-in quarters for the nurses. Through the efforts of Board members Mary Walker, Mitzi Ridall and Diney Walrath, and with the help of the interior designer, Chester LeMaistre, the Home was decorated and furnished with elegant simplicity that still allowed for its functional purpose.



Although specifically designed for its services to infants and families, the Kentucky Avenue home was at the same time gracious, warm and homelike.

The Home's first floor contained two large public rooms and a kitchen, plus offices for two social workers and the director. On the second floor were the nurseries for the babies and the attendant rooms. The third floor was the nurses living quarters. In addition, there were sunrooms on the first and second floor, the latter used as areas for volunteers to feed and rock the babies.

In 1975 the building underwent some remodeling to accommodate rental space for the Parental Stress Center, a pilot program for the benefit of battered and abused children established by the Home, Allegheny County Juvenile Court, Children's Hospital, Child Welfare Services, and the Child Guidance Center. This collaborative effort was located in the Home, and the nursing staff and volunteers provided non-medical residential services for abused infants. In order to provide the necessary rental space, which would bring needed revenue into the Home, the first floor office was divided to accommodate the Center which was allotted several beds in the nursery on the second floor. In addition, there was space allocated for the "tenants" on the lower level of the building. In 1982 the Parental Stress Center moved to its own facility and made way for the Home's increased social service staff in Adoption and the renovations needed for Transitional Infant Care, the Home's new hospital unit, which would open in 1984 to provide care for premature and high-risk infants.

TIC, as the hospital came to be called, required space and structural design which would meet hospital standards for licensure. In addition to remodeled nursery and office space, the entire second floor included an x-ray room and laboratory. The whole hospital area was equipped with its own filtered air, heating and cooling systems. Plans for the remodeling were drawn up by the architectural firm of Valentour and English. Lou Valentour would, a few years later, become a member of the Board of Directors of the Home.

As in the months preceding the original construction of the Home, there were some zoning obstacles to overcome during the renovations. The neighborhood was concerned about the idea of a hospital in its midst, and it took many meetings to assure the residents in the community that there would not be loud ambulance sirens or hordes of people coming in and out at all hours. In spite of the best efforts of the Board, however, it took legal action before the renovations could begin.

The changes to the second floor necessitated additional changes throughout the building, not the least of which was making room for the elevator, an essential hospital requirement. The elevator shaft reduced the kitchen space on the first floor, and the administrative offices were re-designed to allow for a more accessible reception area and front desk. The sunroom, which had earlier been used for volunteers and small meetings, was changed to accommodate the accounting services, which expanded dramatically with the establishment of TIC. The third floor, which originally housed the nursing staff for adoption, became the entire Adoption Department, with offices, counseling rooms, a small kitchen, reception area and sitting room. The basement was remodeled to become temporary living quarters for the families of TIC infant patients.

In slightly more than a decade, the new Children's Home underwent dramatic changes that reflected the expansions and changes in services and the increase in professional staff to provide those services. And yet, despite what some might call its more "utilitarian usage," the Home on Kentucky Avenue has retained its gracious, homelike appearance, conducive to the services of both programs.

Renovations for TIC in 1982 met with local opposition at first, but the Home continued to retain its exterior charm.

Life in the Nursery

In the Society's early days, the Home of Temporary Care housed children whose care was supervised by warm and dedicated Matrons, ministers' wives, and Board members. As the Home did not accept infants in those days, trained and skilled nursing care was not vital. However, with the admission of infants, and as a result of state and local regulations, the credentials of those overseeing the care of the Home's babies became important.

Miss Adah Martz, hired in 1928, was the first registered nurse on staff. It was she who, with Dr. Ellsmer Piper, later started the student nurse program that was to be so important to the Home. Dr. Piper was the examining doctor for many years, serving in that capacity as well as Board member and founder/instructor for the nursing program. He did not charge for his services. By the 1950's, however, the Home's staff doctors received a small salary, and they examined the babies on a weekly basis with consulting physicians brought in as needed. The doctors in succession included Laurence Denegan, M.D. who was followed by Rita Nealon, M.D., and later by Gibson Buchanan, M.D. who remained until 1984 when the medical team established for infants in the newly created hospital program, Transitional Infant Care, assumed the examination of the adoptive infants as well.

The student nurse program began in 1930 primarily as a means of obtaining a good supply of well-trained nurses to care for the Home's infants for a minimal wage. Whether or not it was intentional, a secondary benefit of the program was an abundant availability of nannies for Board members and friends, a custom which lasted into the 50's. The course of study was for one year, with an average class of five to six girls who were required to remain at the Home for at least two years after graduation. In 1933 the Board minutes reflected a discussion about changing the training program to two years and the name of the program to the "Child Guidance Nursing School." However, there is no record that either suggestion was ever acted upon. According to Loretta Mock McGrew, R.N., who headed the program in the 50's, it was named the Children's Home of Pittsburgh Child Nursing School. At its peak in the late 1930's, the school was canceled for four years during World War II and reopened in 1945. While it functioned well for fifteen years, it began to attract fewer and fewer students until finally in 1962 the program was discontinued.

The girls who came to the program were mostly from small towns near Pittsburgh, usually from families who wanted their daughters to be well taken care of in the big city as they learned a useful profession. As with all colleges and nursing schools of the day, "in loco parentis" was in full force, and students' families felt quite secure with their girls at the Home.

Students lived dormitory style on the third floor of the Home on South Aiken Avenue, with strict rules for their leisure hours. Except for their uniforms, everything was free to the students, including tuition, room and board. In exchange, the girls cared for the Home's infants in their spare hours and were expected to work as a staff nurse in the Home after completion of the course. They were given pins upon graduation at the commencement exercises which were held in the spring, usually at the First Methodist Church on South Aiken Avenue about two blocks from the Home. The Board of Managers was in charge of the celebration after the ceremony, with the students, their families and friends, Board members, and the full complement of staff nurses in attendance. It was quite a party, sometimes held at the Hotel Schenley, or at the Home. Mrs. T., mentioned earlier and regarded with great affection, began her association with the Home as a student nurse in 1940. She recalls:

> *I got a diploma . . . after a total of eighteen months of study. I worked directly with the babies and lived there on the third floor with the other students.*

Graduates of the program who wanted to continue in the nursing field had to take more courses, even to become an L.P.N., as the school was not accredited. Nonetheless, it performed a very real service in teaching young girls to become "mother's helpers." In addition, it gave them a taste of the future, whether it was to take care of babies, their own or someone else's, or to decide to get advanced training in the field.

As student nurses, the girls performed all the duties of infant care and housekeeping pertaining to the running of a nursery. It wasn't until the 1940's that staff members were paid to do the laundry and cleaning. The students and staff nurses did it all, including washing diapers. Classes were held two hours each day, and included psychology at Carnegie Tech's Margaret Morrison College and observation field trips to nearby hospitals. Miriam Weikert, head of Child Development at Margaret Morrison, conducted an experimental nursery school

where the student nurses spent a week observing and interacting with the preschoolers. In exchange, Miss Weikert brought some of her own Margaret Morrison students to the Home on Saturday mornings to receive demonstrations on baby care from the Home's nurses. Most of the courses were taught by Loretta McGrew, R.N., in charge of the nursery from 1940-1950. A variety of professors came in to instruct the students from time to time in various aspects of nursing care, most of which pertained to home nursing and simple baby tending.

The women of the Board made life as interesting and pleasant as they could for the young girls. Johnny Gould, an active member in those times, recalls "field trips, museums, concerts, lectures. We had parties and even took them to someone's country house one time." Members such as Betty Brown, Frannie Seifert, and Willeen Benedum were involved in decorating and furnishing rooms to make them more homelike and to provide a space in the basement where the girls could visit with dates or friends. They worked hard to secure furniture at good prices from such places as Beck's Charter Oaks and The Joseph Horne Company.

During the depression years, student nurses were easy to find through word-of-mouth, and there was no problem in filling up the classes for almost twenty years. It wasn't until the February 1952 Board minutes that mention was made of the scarcity of students and the need to advertise in the newspaper for applicants. For the next several years the program floundered, which led to the publication of a folder written by Board member David Ketchum to be sent to "Methodist friends and proper contacts." However, in spite of the folder's publicity, in 1956 there was only a possibility of a few girls for enrollment in the next class.

Catherine Helbling, R.N.

The trend continued downward, and the student nursing program fell upon permanent hard times in the prosperity of the late 50's and early 60's. The abundance of available jobs and rising salaries, coupled with the advent of state approved practical nursing schools, resulted in the Children's Home program becoming virtually obsolete. In 1962, it was eliminated altogether.

Mrs. Catherine Helbling, R.N., in charge of the nursery from 1963 until it closed in 1983, has recalled that although the student nurse program ended by the time of her arrival at the Home, there was a nurse's aide program in place. The candidates for this program were recent graduates from local high schools who

Student nurses lived dormitory style. The women of the Board made life as interesting and pleasant as they could for the young girls.

had not chosen a vocation and were indecisive about their plans. They would come to the Home to work for perhaps a year, and while they received no formal training, they were given room and board, and a small salary. These girls, together with three or four practical nurses and one registered nurse, in addition to Mrs. Helbling, made up the nursing staff during the 60's. Board member Glo Heiner worked as an advocate for the nursing staff during those years, and saw to it that their pay and working conditions were adequate. State and local welfare rules mandated that a registered nurse be in attendance at all times.

Over the years the Home saw a steady decrease in the age of the children taken in for adoptive placement, and by the time of the move to South Aiken Avenue in 1930, the nurseries were planned for infants and very small children only. When Loretta McGrew was hired in the 40's, the oldest child in the nursery was about two years old. However, professionals were becoming more aware that infants should be placed as early as possible with their adoptive families. Mrs. Helbling reported that during her tenure, the average length of stay in the Home's nursery was about three to four months. Occasionally babies with problems would stay six months or longer, but the staff tried to keep them in the nursery only for observation purposes and until the legal work was completed.

At the nursery on South Aiken Avenue, as well as later in the Kentucky Avenue Home, Board members came in regularly to help. In 1965 Mrs. Leslie Worthington was given a commendation by the Board, not only for her own work at the Home, but for her enthusiastic encouragement of the other members to volunteer their time. Janey Follansbee is also remembered as another quiet impetus in organizing Board women for volunteer duty at the Home. It was never difficult, of course, to find helpers to feed and hold the babies in the nursery, but these two women, and others through the years, were particularly gifted in inspiring members to help with other chores.

Volunteers other than Board members gave their time after work hours to help feed the babies at dinner time. Two of these helpers worked for the airlines, and another group from the Homestead Steel Works, called "The Steelettes," also contributed their time. Mrs. Helbling recalls that "the babies in the nursery were on a schedule just as in a family, and were fed and put to sleep at regular hours." There were swings and playpens for times when the babies were awake. At times, the nursery accommodated close to twenty-four infants, and feeding times were obviously difficult. Help from volunteers was very much appreciated.

While the nursery was certainly the most vital room at the Home, the kitchen was significant as well. Since room and board constituted partial and sometimes total payment for the nursing staff, the preparation of meals was important. While there probably had always been a cook at the Home, Mae Lyons, who arrived in 1955, became an institution there until her retirement in 1983, and is still fondly remembered by many. She cooked both lunch and dinner for the live-in nurses, and in later years only lunch. This practice continued into the new Home on Kentucky Avenue, where a hearty noon meal was served to all personnel . . . nurses, social workers and secretaries alike.

With the renovations required for the new Transitional Infant Care unit and the decision to dissolve the nursery in favor of foster family care, the serving of meals ended in 1983.

It was not difficult to find volunteers to feed and hold the babies in the nursery.

The Birth of a Hospital—"TIC"

In September of 1984, The Children's Home of Pittsburgh formally opened its doors to a second program, Transitional Infant Care, which has come to be known as TIC. This specialty hospital for premature and high-risk infants was established to provide innovative medical and convalescent care to a population of infants and their families whose needs had been identified within the community by health care professionals.

With the decline in the numbers of infants available for adoption, and the resulting precarious financial position of the Home, the need to establish a second program at the Home became apparent by the late 1970's. Not only were the number of adoptions down, but charitable giving had dropped as well. The increased professionalism in the Home's adoption services had increased salaries and expenses, and contributed to a seemingly endless erosion of the Home's cash resources. In June 1981, after many months of Board deliberation, the Executive Committee decided to form a Future Planning Committee whose task was to assess community needs and identify an area of service compatible with the Home's mission of service to infants. Such a service was not to replace the adoption program, but to supplement it by utilizing already existing space within the building, and helping to offset overhead expenses not met by the adoption services.

Mitzi Ridall served as chairman of this important committee, and hired a professional part-time consultant, Marlene West, who had resigned from the position of executive director in 1979. Members of the committee investigated various areas of service including day care, child care for court custody cases, hospice care, temporary foster care, and housing for parents of hospitalized children.

In January 1982, through the efforts of committee member Priscilla Ebert, the Home made contact with the administrator of Children's Hospital, Harold Luebs, who greeted the Home's search for a new service with enthusiasm. He arranged for a meeting with Ronald David, M.D., a neonatologist on the staff of Magee-Womens Hospital as well as Children's, who had expressed interest in developing a level of care for premature and high-risk infants beyond that provided in neonatal intensive care units. The subsequent concept of transitional care for recovering infants, envisioned by Dr. David as a bridge between the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and home, formed the basis of TIC, which became the first free-standing facility of its kind in the country.

A year of research, a financial feasibility study, and collaborative efforts among health care professionals, consumers, and educators who served on a Program Advisory Committee, led to a rigorous licensing process. This process officially began in January 1983 and culminated nine months later in the obtaining of a Certificate of Need from the Health Systems Agency (H.S.A.) whose function was to oversee the planning of all new hospital services in the area.

The Program Advisory Committee consisted of experts from the many disciplines involved with infant health care, and included physicians, nurses, social workers, parents of high-risk infants, educators and infant development specialists. Meeting together just three times, the committee's task was to "brainstorm," define and design Transitional Infant Care in order to develop a concrete plan to work with. The work of that group of highly talented individuals was invaluable in laying the groundwork for what has become a model and unique specialty hospital. With a focus on total family care, the philosophy and approach to providing medical and convalescent care to premature and high-risk infants included the integrating of these infants back into their families while training their parents in the skills necessary for them to gain confidence and competence.

Ronald David, M.D.

The planning efforts for TIC guided by Marlene West as professional consultant, moved with amazing speed and were broad in scope. When it was determined by Dr. David, who emerged as the conceptual architect of the program, that TIC would be physically compatible with the Home's facility, the financial feasibility of the project was put in the hands of the accounting firm of Ernst and Whinney. An important aspect of that firm's job was to analyze projected occupancy data compiled from area hospitals by Dr. David. During the same period of time, Marlene West and Priscilla Ebert made the rounds of the potential referring hospitals' administrators, inviting them to tour the Home and learn more about the proposed new service. For a while, possibilities of collaborating with Magee-Womens were discussed. Visits were made along the way with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Children's Heart Hospital, also in Philadelphia, to gather ideas and information on staffing and delivery of services.

While the Board had voted in October 1981 to pursue future planning

possibilities in the area of infant care, the actual concept of TIC was not introduced to them until March of 1982 when the progress of the committee was reported in some detail. Only a few Board members were actually involved in the TIC flurry of activity at that time; most of the others were still primarily concerned with the problems of the adoption program. Cautiously receptive to the idea of the establishment of an entirely new program, the Board nevertheless continued to support the efforts of those who eagerly pursued the Home's dream of a hospital for premature and high-risk infants, a population with which many members were unfamiliar.

Throughout the summer of 1982, Marlene West, Priscilla Ebert, Betsy Wiegand, Dotty Beckwith and other Board members collected information from many sources around the country about care for the high-risk infant population. Contacts were made in Harrisburg with officials involved in licensure procedures, and talks were initiated with Blue Cross officials to learn about reimbursement possibilities for the new planned services. Dr. David worked diligently as part of the team, making invaluable contacts with his professional colleagues.

Concurrent with the information gathering and endorsement efforts was the solicitation for funding to support the feasibility study. Six local supporters of the project provided $33,000 in "good faith" money. They included the Junior League of Pittsburgh, Mutual of New York, Beckwith Machinery Company, The Calhoun Foundation, The Benedum Foundation, and The Hunt Foundation. The actual work of putting together the "pieces of the puzzle" was carried out by Ernst and Whinney, for financial input, Thorp, Reed and Armstrong for legal advice, and Valentour and English for architectural guidance.

In addition to the necessary early financial support TIC received, the Home was encouraged by the enthusiastic endorsements of prominent members of the Pittsburgh medical community. Among them were T.K. Oliver, M.D., Chairman of Pediatrics at Children's Hospital, and John Gaisford, M.D., Head of the Burn Unit at West Penn Hospital. Their endorsements were critical to the project's success not only in terms of professional credibility, but also in ultimate fundraising efforts.

In October 1982 after an encouraging nine months of study, Priscilla Ebert, the Board member coordinating the effort with Marlene West, who by then had been re-hired as the full-time executive director, presented the results of the study

to the Board. The presentation included slides of infants in neonatal intensive care, taped interviews with parents of high-risk infants who had experienced extended NICU stays, and a moving statement by Dr. David underscoring the need for such a program as TIC. The result was a favorable vote and a commitment by the Board of the Home to proceed with plans to establish Transitional Infant Care as a second program while continuing to strengthen adoption services.

As often occurs when change is imminent, there were some Board members who, despite the formal endorsement of TIC, were concerned that eliminating the nursery for adoption, which was a necessity for the establishment of TIC, might be emotionally divisive for the Board. Some were apprehensive about the possibility of TIC supplanting the Home's long-established adoption program. However, their fears were allayed by detailed updates not only on the progress of TIC, but on changes going on in the adoption program which continued to strengthen it. Those who had been so devoted to the nursery came to understand the wisdom of placing the pre-adoptive infants into foster family care, thus diffusing the "blame" for the nursery closure from this new "upstart," TIC.

The Home underwent considerable renovations to the building to conform to hospital regulations. The contract was awarded to the Jendoco Construction Corporation while the firm of Valentour and English provided the architectural plans and supervision. To finance the renovation and start-up costs, a million dollar capital campaign was conducted from June 1983 to 1984 which was not only a financial success, but helped to firmly position The Children's Home of Pittsburgh as a dynamic agency in the eyes of the corporate and foundation community of Pittsburgh.

To organize the campaign, the Home hired its first professional development director who assumed roles heretofore played quite successfully by active and capable Board members. The campaign was officially launched at a luncheon sponsored by Mellon Bank for local corporate and foundation leaders, and was indeed a resounding success. Pledges were made over a three-year period, with the majority of the money coming in far earlier. Local foundations and corporations were significant contributors, with the R.K. Mellon Foundation making the lead gift.

During the summer of 1984, the staff of TIC was hired, procedures and policies were written, and final inspection for hospital licensure took place. Dr. David

agreed to serve as Medical Administrator for TIC, and Robert Cicco, M.D., Chief of Pediatrics at West Penn Hospital was chosen to serve as the first Clinical Medical Director. The director of TIC was Patricia Salitros, R.N. who held that position until June 1987 when she was replaced by Jan Glick, who continues to manage TIC today, with Alan Lantzy, M.D. succeeding Dr. Cicco as Clinical Medical Director.

TIC family living area includes eating, sleeping and sitting areas where families can spend time alone with their babies . . . and feel "almost home."

Defining TIC . . . A Hospital in Disguise

In October 1984 when Ginny Thornburgh, wife of Pennsylvania's Governor Dick Thornburgh, cut the ribbon at TIC's official opening reception, the public-at-large did not totally understand the scope of the new program. It took a great deal of public relations and marketing efforts to the professional community to define this innovative new level of care which was occupying almost half the space in the Home on Kentucky Avenue.

PHOTO BY SUZANNE ARMS

Transitional Infant Care is both a physical hospital facility and a total program of care for the population of premature and high-risk infants and families it serves. Originally licensed for six beds, (since expanded to ten), the cozy nursery environment and comfortable family living quarters have been described as a "hospital in disguise." Its homelike environment, philosophy, and family-centered approach to care are based on the belief that the neonatal trauma of very low birth weight and the complications of prematurity impact significantly not only on the infant, but on the family as a whole.

Babies are referred and transferred from area hospitals where they have experienced prolonged stays in neonatal intensive care units. In the quiet, homelike setting of TIC, a trained staff provides excellent medical care to convalescing and recovering infants while training parents to participate actively in their baby's care. "Helping parents to gain confidence and competence in meeting the needs of their infants is one of our main goals," Director Jan Glick has stated frequently. Parents are recognized as equal and vital members of their infant's care team, and each family's unique needs, schedules and behavioral styles are carefully considered in their baby's care plan. Empowering parents to regain "ownership" of their infants who, of necessity, have relied on medical professionals in an acute care setting, facilitates a smooth transition into the home. Nancy Kennedy, R.N., who has been with TIC since its beginning and served as Head Nurse since 1987, describes the roles of her staff nurses as "teachers/trainers" in addition to direct care providers.

"Graduates" of TIC, families, friends and staff gather annually at the Reunion Picnic for fun and festivities.

One of TIC's special features is its tranquil environment. In the softly decorated nursery, nurses wear everyday clothing, and lights are kept low. In addition to the nursery, there are family living quarters where family members may spend time during their infant's stay. Parents are encouraged to stay overnight with their infant prior to discharge where they are able to gain a sense of what daily life with their baby may be like.

From being merely a "vision" in 1982, as well as a necessary "shot in the arm" for the operations of the Children's Home, TIC has emerged as a successful and well-recognized innovative specialty hospital which has provided care to over 130 infants and families each year. It has achieved a high level of professional credibility as well through its sponsorship of two national conferences in the city of Pittsburgh in 1986 and 1991, attracting close to 200 participants at each from many parts of the country. In addition, the TIC staff has presented numerous workshops and participated on many panels focusing on TIC's philosophy and family-centered approach to neonatal care and its value as an alternative to prolonged stays in intensive care units. In 1989 it was the recipient of the Healthy Babies Award presented by the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Pennsylvania. In 1990 it received the Medical Care Provider Award from Pittsburgh's Health Education Center, an affiliate of Blue Cross. TIC was also featured in the 1990 Innovator's Catalogue published by the Healthcare Forum in San Francisco, which showcases institutions across the country that have developed creative and inspiring solutions to health care problems within their community.

In 1991 TIC was honored by the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania as the winner in its annual Achievement Awards Contest in the category of Community Outreach and Education for its 1991 conference entitled "Parents and Professionals: A Necessary Partnership in the NICU and Beyond." That conference was the culmination of successful Board and staff collaboration and planning, and it attracted a number of nationally known professional speakers from many disciplines involved in infant health care.

Each June the Children's Home hosts a Reunion Picnic for all its TIC "graduates" and families, an event which is comparable in warmth and sentiment to the annual Adoption Homecoming held each autumn. The festive afternoon, traditionally a Sunday, features games, clowns, balloons, pony rides, face painting, and in recent years a petting zoo, all geared to enhance the joyful coming

together of the once very fragile infants with members of the staff who provided them such loving care. For the parents, returning to the site of a very meaningful experience for themselves and their babies, it is an emotional opportunity for them to show off their children, "many of whom are healthy and bouncy by now," according to Valerie Armocida-Gass, a valuable member of the TIC staff since its early days.

The Board involvement in the TIC Picnic is an enormous investment in time and energy. While the first few events were held in parks around the community, the picnic has been held recently on the grounds of the Home, with a tent over the parking lot to cover tables spread generously with food. The block of Kentucky Avenue in the front is used for pony rides, which are ever popular with the TIC families as well as children and grandchildren from the surrounding neighborhood. Some of the hard-working and creative Board members who have been responsible for the success of the fun-filled day include Peggy Douglass, Sally Roberts, Elin Roddey, Phyllis Andrews, Sally Fownes, and Diney Walrath. It is one event for which the volunteer needs are seldom difficult to fill.

As TIC looks toward its tenth anniversary, plans are already in progress to expand and enhance its services to provide care for even a broader range of high-risk infants. With each passing year, TIC has become a more viable and important part of the Children's Home, which has indeed been enriched by the significant impact that it has made on the well-being of the infants and families it serves.

Infant Adoption Program . . . Meeting the Changing Times

During the years from 1936 to 1975, the Children's Home experienced near bankruptcy, a reorganization, and a name change. World War II came and went, and the baby boom and years of prosperity stayed. The old Home on South Aiken Avenue was outgrown and replaced by a new one. The staff grew bigger and became more professional, and as inflation brought about tighter money, fund-raising became a way of life for the agency. Yet, adoption, the primary focus of the Home, changed only slightly during that time.

Babies available for adoptive placement were found by individual referrals and contacts with maternity homes and hospitals. Couples wanting to adopt "phoned in" and were placed on a waiting list for subsequent family study by the Home's social workers. Members of the Board of the Home met prospective adoptive couples for preliminary placement meetings to explain the adoption procedures, and were often involved with the social workers in the matching process which resulted in the placement of a baby with an appropriate set of adoptive parents. Photographs were taken at "going home day" as the staff and family members gathered in the living room at the Children's Home. Until the 1970's babies were plentiful, the nursery was full, and the enthusiasm of the active members of the Board was apparent as they participated in the care and feeding of the infants in the nursery as eager adjuncts to the professional staff.

"Going Home Day"

During the 1970's came dramatic changes in all aspects of the country's social and moral environment as a result of the upheavals in society generated by the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the sexual revolution. There developed an unprecedented climate of open sexuality and freedom of expression along with a greater acceptance of single parenting, reducing the

historical stigma placed upon young women with unplanned pregnancies. All of this impacted dramatically on the entire adoption world and very specifically on the Children's Home.

Perhaps of greatest significance was the decline in the numbers of infants available for adoption resulting from not only the changes in society's outlook, but also the birth control pill and acceptance of abortion. Pregnant women had simply more options available to them. Another change which challenged the traditional adoption procedures at the Home was the desire for active involvement by birthmothers as well as adoptive couples. Both groups began to seek more participation in a process that had heretofore belonged almost exclusively to agency social workers. Both groups began to question blind obedience to those authority figures who had played such a prominent part in the shaping of their family lives and the lives of their infants.

This desire for participation and control led to the expansion of the practice of independent or private adoptions in which couples and birthparents by-passed agencies altogether and either advertised or found each other by personal referrals. Adoptive placements increasingly were made without benefit of the customary counseling and in-depth home studies, and without the seemingly endless waiting periods which agencies such as the Home usually required. The end result was fewer babies in the nursery on Kentucky Avenue. In spite of the pitfalls of independent adoptions in which there were often few support services for any of the principals involved . . . no records of social or medical histories, questionable legal procedures, and sometimes exorbitant fees . . . the declining need for agency involvement certainly put a damper on the activities at the Home by the late 1970's.

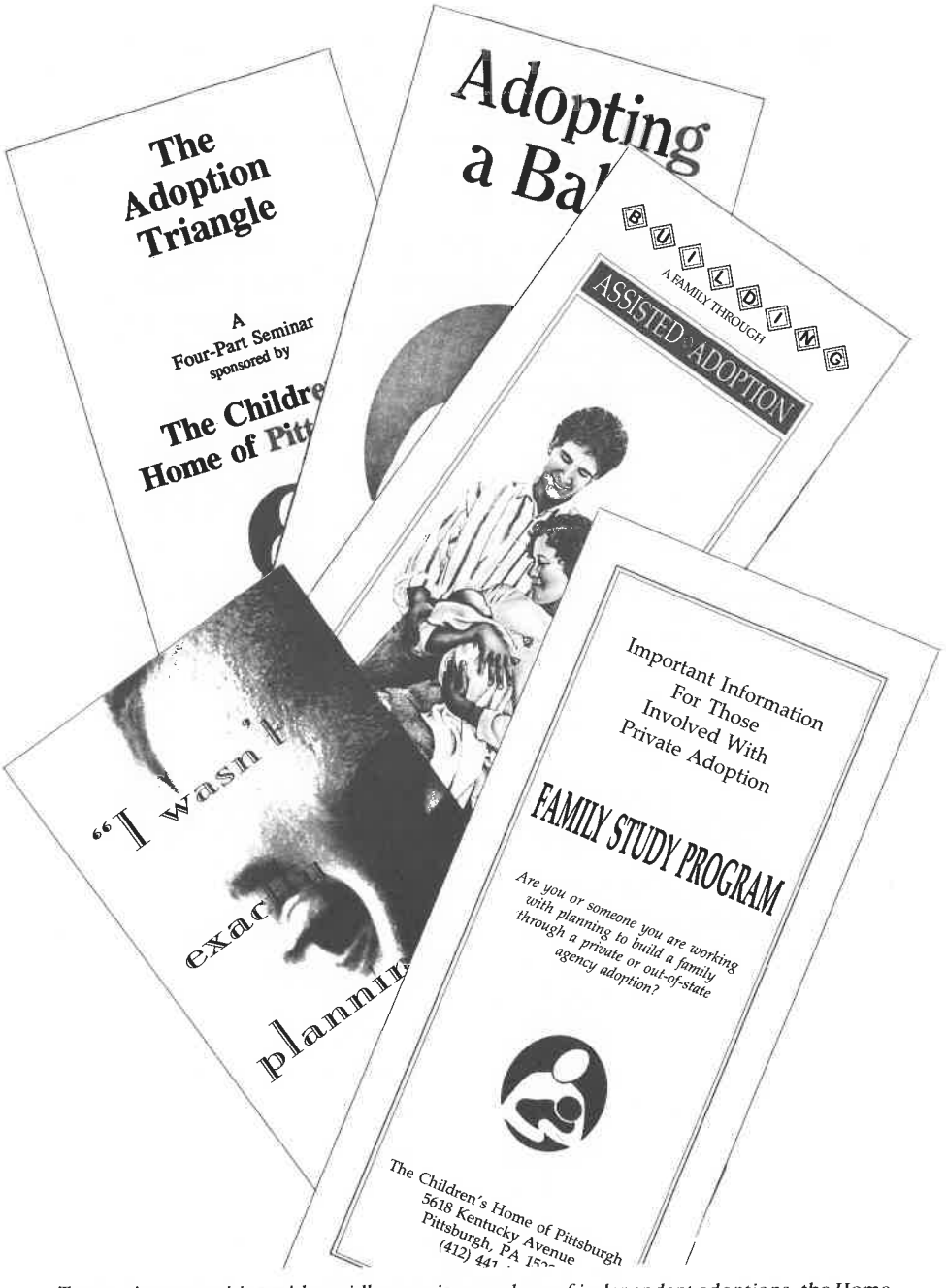
Another change in the Home's adoption practices took place in the establishment of fees in 1978. Discussed for years but never implemented, the idea of charging fees had always been rejected by the Board of Directors who held the view that individual public donations would somehow continue to be available to offset the costs involved in adoption services. However, the late 70's was a time of inflation and rising prices, which led to a decrease in the Home's Annual Appeal as more community organizations clamored for the same charitable dollars. The fee schedule, initiated in 1978 and modified over the years under the jurisdiction of the courts, enabled the Home not only to continue its high quality of agency services but to expand its professional staff as well, to insure the best possible outcome for mother, baby, and family alike.

With the closing of the nursery in 1983, in recognition of the benefits to the infants of family care versus a nursery setting, as well as to make room for Transitional Infant Care, the adoption program examined all of its procedures to determine if it was indeed keeping up with all the changes in the adoption world. To remain competitive with the rapidly growing numbers of independent adoptions, the Home established another option in its "menu" of services for couples wishing to adopt. The Assisted Adoption program was begun in 1987 for those couples who wanted a blend of the best aspects of both agency and private alternatives. In assisted adoptions, couples take the responsibility for locating an adoptable baby while availing themselves of the services provided by an agency. The Home provides, as requested, services including counseling for both birthparents and adoptive couples, temporary foster care, housing for birthmothers, family studies, and legal services, all of which help to provide a "safety net" for those opting to adopt independently.

Along with the establishment of Assisted Adoption came more "openness" in the Home's overall handling of adoption procedures. Birthparent workers began to give greater priority to the wishes and needs of the mothers planning to place their infants, sharing with them the characteristics of their child's potential adoptive family and exchanging with both a greater amount of non-identifying information than had been made available in the early years of the Home's operations. In some cases, birthmothers and adoptive parents began to meet anonymously if all parties desired to do so. This would have been unthinkable just a decade earlier!

Evolving from the new openness has emerged yet another new service at the Home called Research and Reunion. Responding to the growing requests for birth history and information on biological parents, the Home provides assistance for adult adoptees, over the age of eighteen, who have obtained a court order allowing the Home to release pertinent information to them. This service, established in 1987, has resulted in making possible reunions mutually desired both by adoptees and their biological parents.

Because of the benefits of early placement within a family setting, in the late 1980's some infants began to be placed directly into their adoptive homes from the hospital. These direct placements, made before legal relinquishment procedures have been completed, are made upon the request of the adopting family and the birthparents and when the Home's staff is sufficiently confident



To remain competitive with rapidly growing numbers of independent adoptions, the Home established a "menu" of services.

that the birthparents are firm in their decision to place their baby. Obviously there are some risks involved, but the rewards for the infant and family can also be great.

In recent years, the Children's Home's adoption services have shifted from their historical focus of primarily finding homes for healthy white infants. With the ever-increasing numbers of babies being born with medical and physical needs, the Home has expanded its community role to identify families able to provide homes for those children who are "harder to place." In addition to those with special needs, there are increasing numbers of black infants and those of mixed race who are in great need of permanent adoptive homes. As the Children's Home entered the 90's, an intense effort was made to find families for these infants. To facilitate these efforts, in 1991 the Home became a participating member of One Church/One Child, an organization established state-wide and nationally to help locate black adoptive families.

Consistent with the Home's increased involvement in the needs of the community, and its increased cooperation and collaboration with other agencies who share similar missions of service to infants and families, the Children's Home in recent years has reached beyond its own constituency in providing educational seminars and conferences on adoption issues for all those involved in the adoption process. In 1987 Board member Sally Roberts was instrumental in organizing a series of Adoptive Parenting Seminars, held at the Shadyside Presbyterian Church. Open to the public, the popular series has attracted parents, children, educators, health care professionals, lawyers and ministers. Enthusiasm for the high quality of the discussions had led to the establishment of support groups for birthmothers who are considering or who already have placed their babies for adoption, for adolescent adoptees, and for adoptive couples who wish to share adoptive parenting experiences.

Perhaps the most obvious change over its 100 years of providing adoption services is the Home's increase in professionalism. Unlike earlier years, when the Board members had considerable involvement, adoption proceedings now are handled completely by a trained, experienced staff. Barbara Schultz, the current director of the Adoption Program, oversees a dedicated and capable group of workers whose professional and interpersonal skills make possible the high quality

of adoption counseling and placement services for which the Home has come to be known. The Board's Adoption Committee, however, remains very active in policy decisions and plans for changes or expansions in services.

It would be appropriate to say "We've come a long way, baby!" . . . and indeed we have. Yet, as the needs of society continue to change, the Children's Home will continue to change and grow as well in its efforts to ensure that each of its infants receives the best possible start in life with the most appropriate, loving and permanent family.

Continuity with Change: Administration and Leadership

Continuity in leadership as well as Board participation have been cited as prime reasons for the excellence of service given to its clients over the years by the Children's Home. Since the reorganization of the Children's Home in 1936, with the exception of a brief period of less than eighteen months, four women have "headed" the Home's professional operations. Each of them represented an era, from Frances Eiseman who started as a field missionary with the old Children's Home Society, through Marlene West, M.A., M.S.W., the present executive director, a social service professional trained both by education and experience. Memories and reflections of these women from their associates give colorful pictures of the Children's Home and how it has grown and developed. It is interesting to note that in spite of its predominantly male leadership during its formative years, the administrative functions of the Home have been carried out in recent years by women.

Frances Eisman was taken from her work in the field and put in charge of adoptions at the Home when the new bylaws of 1936 transferred those duties from the superintendent to a social worker. Memories of Miss Eisman from long-time Board member Mary Walker, describe an adoption worker typical of that bygone era:

> *She was the Director of the Home, the caseworker and everything else. She had no college training at all, just a woman interested in adoption . . . she just liked children.*

Since Miss Eiseman did not drive, she was chauffeured by Board or other staff members to pick up babies and to interview prospective adoptive families at their homes. Her successor, Liz McConnell, recalls that:

> *All that I heard about her was that she wore a hat all the time . . . was very proper, very refined and cultured. She supposedly always wore black.*

Recollections such as these reflect the customs of the day and show adoption as it used to be not only in Pittsburgh, but probably elsewhere as well when hard work and dedication were the hallmark of adoption workers who spared no effort in building new families through adoption.

Elizabeth McConnell, head of the Home from 1950 to 1955, came from Juvenile

Court with a Master of Social Work degree. The Home's first trained worker, she accomplished a great deal during her five years of administration. Eliminating many of the old ideas and practices, she organized records and changed the adoption procedures, instituting the family study as a routine part of the adoption process.

A large, outspoken Irish-Catholic woman, Liz McConnell Manning recently spoke of her stay at the Home:

> *I was something different for them [the Board]. I told things like they were . . . but we got along, we understood each other.*

She recalled fondly how kind the Board members were to her when she was married, and how she received a set of sterling and numerous wedding presents. Former Board member Johnny Gould, who joined in 1952, remembers Liz McConnell as relaxed, happy and personable . . . well-liked and diplomatic with both adoptive parents and the Board. McConnell's successor, Rena Rapp Hohosh, described her as:

> *Ideal for the Home . . . she was just what they needed . . . trained, forthright, honest . . . and she loved children.*

When Liz McConnell left in 1955 to be married, it was on her suggestion that the Board interview Rena Rapp, her former co-worker at Juvenile Court. Rena Rapp, who later married Albert Hohosh, joined the Home in 1956 with very high recommendations from the Court, and equally high expectations from the Board. The first mention of Mrs. Hohosh in the minutes of the Annual Directors' Meeting in January 1957 states that:

Mrs. Rena Hohosh

> *We are very happy with Miss Rapp. Her leadership is wonderful, very professional. She does excellent and efficient work. The Home has a new "forward look."*

"Professional" was the word most often used to describe this woman, who had ten years of experience in all aspects of child welfare work at Juvenile Court. She dealt with babies, dependent and neglected children, birthparents and foster parents . . . the whole spectrum of adoption at the Children's Home. Mrs. Hohosh's own summation of her work prior to the Home was that "the museum of experiences was marvelous."

Rena Hohosh became known as "Mrs. Children's Home" to many, and she retained that title for close to twenty years. The quotes that follow reflect the

measure of esteem in which she was held by staff, Board members, and adoptive parents alike:

> *There wouldn't be a Children's Home without Rena.*
>
> *She was very special . . . highly professional as well as very sensitive and very astute in sizing up individuals.*
>
> *She had a big impact on the Home . . . did a marvelous job, had wonderful empathy with parents and children.*
>
> *Great magnetism . . . very vibrant and very knowledgeable.*

Mrs. Hohosh was also remembered as being "good on confrontations" during the zoning hearings in 1966 for the building of the new Home.

> *When the opposing attorney mentioned the neighbors' concerns about the Home's children disrupting the quiet neighborhood by coming in and playing baseball, Rena quietly remarked that "our average baby leaves us at six months, and he's not playing baseball." The opposing side was laughed out of court.*

In the mid-1970's the Home was advised by the state that it must hire an executive director to be in charge, rather than the head of adoption as had been the case for many years. As Mrs. Hohosh was approaching age sixty-five, arrangements began to be made for her retirement, some of which were difficult to accept by those who held strong sentimental feelings for the woman who had brought so much happiness to them and their adoptive families. A group of adoptive parents formally organized Children's Home Adoptive Parents (CHAP), and banned together in opposition to her retirement and in recognition of her many years of dedicated service. They ultimately not only provided her with a substantial gift to supplement her retirement benefits, but hosted a gala party in her honor at the William Penn Hotel. An oil painting of Mrs. Hohosh, commissioned by CHAP, currently hangs in the Adoption Department. The legend of Rena Hohosh continues to this day, and the CHAP organization still exists not only as a social group for adoptive parents, but as supporters and advocates for the Home's adoption services.

B. Marlene West

In 1978 B. Marlene West was hired to be the Home's first executive director. She had worked extensively with Children's Services in Butler, Pennsylvania, and had the education and training to assume the administrative function, bringing with her not only personal warmth and vitality but an ability to organize the operations of the Home with remarkable efficiency.

Board and staff descriptions of Marlene West include her "social worker empathy combined with administrative skills." Past Board President Dotty Beckwith has cited her "dollar accountability," which resulted in each department of the Home working on its own budget. Under Mrs. West's administration, the entire accounting system of the Home has been revised, and the staff has expanded considerably to include well-trained and dynamic professionals. Marlene West has remained in her administrative role since 1978 with the exception of an eighteen-month period when the position was held by James Barrett who came to the Home from Catholic Charities.

The long tenures of the Home's administrators over the past fifty years has parallelled the equivalent longevity of many of the members of the Board. During the recent half- century it has not been uncommon for men and women to work actively on the Board for thirty years, in some cases instilling the Children's Home tradition of service onto the next generation of sons and daughters. The extraordinary partnership and spirit of cooperation between the Home's volunteers and professional staff have played major roles in contributing to the remarkable reputation of the Children's Home as a viable Pittsburgh organization.

The Board . . . Responsibilities and Structure

While donations of all sorts have been crucial to the Home's overall work, the most important of all has been the gift of time generously volunteered by Board members. In its earlier involvement with the adoption services of the Home, the women of the Board in particular contributed to its reputation as one of the most hard working Boards in the city.

At first outnumbered by men, women have been an integral and vital part of the Board since the beginning of the old Society. In early days, the women helped the Matron with the Home of Temporary Care, the children and the staff. After 1940 when Mrs. Harter left, the Board of Managers was given the total responsibility of running the Home. Working tirelessly, they participated in every phase. "It was a pleasure to them since they all loved babies," recalls a former Board president, Johnny Gould. In all the Homes, from Pennwood Street in Edgewood and later to South Aiken and Kentucky Avenues, the women of the Board set up committees to oversee every part of the work from kitchen to nursery. They did it all . . . they hired and fired, checked on the cleaning, decorated and furnished the nurses' living quarters, the babies' nurseries, and the formal living and dining areas. They were available to cuddle and feed the babies and acted as chauffeurs, transporting babies to the hospitals for tests or illnesses since none of the early social workers until 1950 drove a car.

Board women also took pregnant mothers to doctors' offices or to the hospital to deliver. They drove social workers to inspect family homes and drove on countless errands whenever they were needed. They sewed for the children, mending and repairing clothes and bedding. They knitted jackets and bonnets and soakers, the rubber pants of earlier days. They planned, cooked for, and gave parties to raise money, as well as teas to attract referrers of babies. They gave coffees, brunches and annual dinners, plus innumerable events for introducing and congratulating adoptive parents.

The Board structure remained essentially the same from 1936 until 1980. The Board president, its vice presidents and assistant vice presidents represented the men's Board, called the Board of Directors. The women's Board, called the Board of Managers, was headed by a chairman who served as an officer of the Home with the president and vice presidents. Also included as officers were the first

and second vice chairmen of the Board of Managers, the recording and corresponding secretaries, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and Board counsel. Standing committees included: Executive, Adoption, Fundraising, House, and Hospitality, as well as a number of smaller ones entitled Finance, Nominating, Membership, Nursing and Personnel. Through the years committees were formed and disbanded as needed. Some of these were Cookbook, Sewing, Scrapbook, Printing, Dog Show, Library, and Public Affairs.

Gradually, as the organization and activities of the Home involved more professional and less volunteer efforts, much of the Board committee work became absorbed by the Home's staff. Although the adoption program and later Transitional Infant Care began to rely on their professional workers to provide services to clients, the Board women continued to be active in more administrative capacities. They chaired committees and met with lawyers, accountants, architects, hospital administrators, medical personnel and the community-at-large.

In 1978-79, during A.H. (Wardy) Wardwell's tenure as president, consideration was given to the idea of combining the men's and women's Boards. While the men had traditionally provided "corporate thinking," legal analysis and major fundraising, the talents and time commitments of the women were recognized for "making things work." A committee was appointed to examine the proposed restructuring, which resulted in the formation of a merged Board. In January 1980 Betsy Wiegand was installed as the first president of the newly-formed "mixed" Board. Meeting times were subsequently changed from evenings for men and mornings for women to 4:00 P.M., deemed to be a suitable compromise. While the changes in structure and times met with some initial resistance by a few members, the ultimate effect was a more involved Board with responsibilities more equally shared and operations carried on with increased efficiency.

The roster of names of the Children's Home Board of Directors from 1936 to the present includes many well-known and respected Pittsburghers from a range of business, social, philanthropic and professional groups. A complete list of their names appears at the end of this history. Apart from a specific connection with the history of the Home, there are no vignettes of individuals, many of whom, although not mentioned here, gave unstintingly of themselves, their time, energy, talent and financial support. The spirit of the Home certainly has been personified by

its volunteer Board members. There is no question that it is through their devotion and dedication that The Children's Home of Pittsburgh has been kept alive and flourished throughout all its years.

EPILOGUE

In its first 100 years, The Children's Home of Pittsburgh has grown and changed in organization and scope while holding fast to its original mission of service to infants and families. It can look back with pride to the more than 3500 infants who have been placed with loving adoptive families, and the more than 1000 infants and families for whom TIC has provided care.

As those families have grown and changed, so have their needs and those of many more within the community. The Children's Home is continuing to grow and change as well, with a vision of strengthening and expanding its services. Together with other community resources, it is striving to ensure the greatest positive outcomes for all who come to its attention and into its care.