

#### 10. *Community Action*

The primary role of the Center is to provide service to the community through resident participation in various projects. Programs operated by the Center have been instrumental in accomplishing these goals and our researcher noted that many changes became evident during the few months he was there. The cooperation of other organized groups in the community has aided the type of group action that is needed. Churches and fraternal organizations have recruited volunteers to assist the staff in beautification projects, clean-up details, and outreach programs. Many other citizens have given their time to long-range planning for programs and attempting to procure funds for community projects such as sewer system, water system, swimming pool, and playground facilities.

One of the groups most enthusiastic about service to the community is the Senior Citizens Club. The group was formed by the Center personnel for the purpose of providing a service to that age group and to combat their loneliness. It was noted by our observer that discussions during their meetings were becoming more and more community-directed instead of inner-directed. They have realized that their group might also provide service to the town.

Physical reasons would prevent a great deal of participation by this group. Most of them have no cars and since there are no sidewalks in the town, transportation is a problem for them. Nevertheless, the interest is there and this fact in itself is important. These people form a well-established, highly-respected community element and their sanction of any project lends it an important degree of good will. Also, most of them are retired and are unencumbered by family responsibilities so that they have a great deal of time to devote to community activities.

The most active participation in community projects has been exhibited by the group that is considered middle class. It has not been apparent that members of the chronically poor element have organized for group action or even taken part in activities as individuals.

#### 11. *Participation of the Poor*

Due to the economic conditions in the area, almost every citizen of this community is now poor. Many of them were not always poor and it cannot be said that all of them are culturally deprived or educationally deprived. They are middle class in orientation, and they feel that presently (and temporarily) their community is merely economically deprived. These people feel that through collective action they may be able to pull themselves out of these straits. Members of this group are the ones who participate and volunteer their services on board meetings, committees, beautification projects, and clean-up details.

There exists another strata of the poor in the community—the hard-to-reach poor who apparently have been living on public welfare since the closing of the mines. It does not appear that many of these people have been affected by any Center program. They have been known to refuse employment opportunities, educational programs for children, and information programs for adults. One respondent was questioned about the Head Start program. When asked why her child was not entered she replied that the child had no transportation and that she did not want her to ride the bus provided by the Center. Other respondents in this group have offered varied excuses regarding their duties at home for not participating in community activities or going to the Center for classes.

The CAA Board, i.e., the service club, has intended to provide for maximum participation of residents in policy-making and program formulation by opening its membership to all. However, the membership of the organization is a small one, numbering only about twenty, and it appears that many men of this poverty group have not availed themselves of the opportunity to participate.

These hard-to-reach poor are marked by their complacency and apathy toward their situation. It is curious that even though the mining companies took more than a billion dollars of mineral wealth out of this area and left it looking like an abandoned dump, there does not seem to be any deep resentment felt by the surviving residents toward the exploiters of the area.

#### CENTER "G"

##### 1. *History and Origins*

Early in 1964 there were a number of demonstrations by the Negro community protesting de facto segregation. These events made clear to community leaders who were concerned with the general decay in the city that the city needed to