

## SHORT HISTORY OF "THE FRIENDLY CENTER SERVICE GUILD"

Because Friendly Center always operated on limited funds and relied on volunteers and students to keep things going, by 1932 there was a "new small group of church ladies dedicated to helping the center by raising money and doing volunteer work". This group had "strong religious convictions and desire to give hope and help to the neighborhood". It took some time to convince the National Women's Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church that having one support group for just one local agency was necessary. It was finally achieved in 1936, "The Friendly Center Service Guild" was organized. They called it a Guild, because the definition for a Guild from the Middle Ages was "a group of people who had a common interest." "These ladies did all sorts of projects—fundraising, sewing, craft works and were excellent saleswomen. "They had strong religious convictions and the desire to act upon those convictions. The strongest thread that bound them together in this new enterprise was the opportunity to give hope and help to thousands of people.(1)

There have always been enthusiastic women to carry out projects and fund-raisers.

In the 1940's, the Guild raised funds for Camp Friendly near Napoleon, Michigan and for improvements to the Community Center.

Later, scholarships were established to encourage the area children to achieve. Support for the pre-school programs was given and equipment of all kinds was provided.

The membership of 200 at present consists primarily of ladies from the United Methodist Churches in the area, but is open to anyone who is interested.

The best fundraiser in recent years is the "World's Largest Garage Sale". Held in early August at the Epworth UMC, donations of all sorts of items—clothing, furniture, household items, toys, tools, books, holiday items, etc. are donated to be sold. The sale is for three days and brings in thousands of dollars which all goes to help Friendly Center for whatever needs are presented.

Recently the Food Bank had no food for the holiday time and the Guild gave \$3000.

The Service Guild meets the second Tuesday of the month in the FC Community Building gym with an executive meeting at 11 AM, a noon lunch for \$3.25 and program.

1. Saunders and Carr, "The Friendly Center Story"—p. 24