
WOMAN'S CLUB OF CHEVY CHASE

The Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, Maryland, Inc., celebrated its 75th Anniversary on October 1, 1988. The brainchild of three Chevy Chase residents, it originally had 14 members pledged "to promote the welfare of the community and of the state of Maryland." The first president elected under the new constitution was Mrs. George F. Mikkelson. Her husband was a builder in our area, and long-time Chevy Chase residents still speak with pride of "Mikkelson-built" homes. Several of these are on Beechwood Drive. The Junior Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, formed as part of the club, is now a separate entity.

In its early years, the club met at a number of places, including Chevy Chase Elementary School. It moved to its present handsome white brick clubhouse at 7931 Connecticut Avenue in 1938. The land for the clubhouse had been purchased the year before for 25 cents per square foot.

The club's activities achieve three goals. They enrich the lives of its members, benefit the residents of the Chevy Chase community, and, in a number of instances, benefit a much larger community.

In the first category are the section meetings for members that include classes in various arts and crafts, such as painting and jewelry making. There are also sections dedicated to learning or improving proficiency in a foreign language, studying international relations, and reviewing books. Members also present plays regularly, give luncheons, play bridge, and engage in many other activities.

It could be said that the lives of club members are also enriched by the great number of projects through which club members influence and benefit the Chevy Chase community.

In the health field, the club has sponsored pre-school vision testing, free clinics for vision and hearing tests, and community health fairs. They have furnished rooms at Suburban Hospital, Children's Hospital, and the Hillcrest Children's Center. In the 1950s, the club established a sickroom loan closet. Items such as walkers and wheel chairs are donated to the closet and are

loaned without charge to members of the community.

The club gives annual music and art scholarships to students in the community. Club members have also been active in service to Chevy Chase Elementary School and in establishing its library.

Seniors are assisted by the club's participation in the Over 60 Counseling and Employment Service and by their sponsorship of a Senior Arts and Crafts Show.

The clubhouse is also the scene of an annual antiques show. Other community service organizations may use the clubhouse without charge. Private individuals and groups may, for a fee, rent the club and its spacious kitchen for social events such as wedding receptions.

Special projects of the club have included support for establishment of a Juvenile Court in Rockville, a central school library, and the serving of hot lunches in schools. Since 1943, club members have provided gifts and tray favors on Christmas Eve to patients at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Over a period of 75 years, club members have given about \$250,000 for charities and \$125,000 for scholarships.

The influence of the club has also been felt in a broader arena. During World War II, members did volunteer work as motor mechanics, Red Cross workers, air craft spotters, and blood donors. The club sold \$75,000 worth of war stamps and bonds, and an airplane was named in its honor.

At the request of the Montgomery County Association for the Visually Handicapped, club members developed the "Easy-See" Cookbook in 1964. It is still being distributed without charge, locally and nationally, to those with limited vision.

Individual club sections often have their own projects. For example, the International Affairs section sponsors two children in Latin America.

Life magazine featured the club in its June 3, 1946, issue and again in 1980. More recently, the governor of Maryland proclaimed October 1988 "The Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, Maryland, Month."

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