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WPA TO PARTICIPATE IN CHILD HEALTH DAY OBSERVANCE MAY 1

Workers on WPA health and recreation projects throughout the country will cooperate with local authorities next Wednesday -- National Child Health Day -- in focusing public attention upon the needs of the nation's children for adequate diet, medical care and recreation services, Mrs. Florence Kerr, Assistant Commissioner in charge of Professional and Service Projects, announced today.

In thousands of communities across the country, Mrs. Kerr said, WPA school lunch projects, medical and dental clinics, park, playground and other recreational and welfare projects will be open for public inspection. It is hoped thereby, she said, to stimulate popular interest in the efforts being made on many fronts to promote the well being of underprivileged children and to reduce America's high infant mortality rate.

"For several years the WPA has been one of the leading contributors to child health and welfare", Mrs. Kerr said. "Through a variety of projects located in almost every community in the land we have aided literally millions of children and mothers in the last five years.

"In cooperation with local and state health authorities we hope to make this seventeenth annual observance of National Child Health Day one of the most effective on record. By awakening the

public to the need for better facilities for underprivileged children and mothers we hope to stimulate greater support for the agencies supplying these much needed services."

In a proclamation issued several weeks ago calling for a united observance of Child Health Day, President Roosevelt said:

"I hereby call upon the people of the United States to consider the recommendations for conserving the health of children made by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy and to take the steps needed to strengthen and extend health protection and medical care for mothers and children in every community."

Mrs. Kerr pointed out that while the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor has taken the lead in the past in sponsoring Child Health Day, it had been decided this year to leave the observance in the hands of the health authorities in the individual states. She urged State Directors of WPA Professional and Service Projects to cooperate with these authorities to the fullest extent in making the occasion a success.

The recent inventory of physical accomplishments on WPA projects, she continued, makes it possible to illustrate effectively the scope of WPA activities in behalf of children. One of the most important of these, she said, is the program for providing free school lunches for the children of underprivileged families. In four and one-half years of operation, Mrs. Kerr declared, more than 386,000,000 lunches have been served under this program. A one day sampling of program activity during January showed a total of 1,129,420 free

lunches prepared and served by WPA workers in 11,190 schools.

Health services made available through the assistance of WPA for a two week period in January included dental treatments and examinations for 27,301 children; medical examinations and treatments in clinics for 26,079; 12,178 home treatments and examinations, and 69,628 examinations and treatments in schools, she said. Housekeeping aides -- trained homemakers -- assisted 57,116 families in which the mother was ill or absent during December. In the four and one-half years covered by the inventory, more than 17,000,000 individual home visits were made by the housekeeping aides.

Parent education and homemaking classes conducted under the Education Program have been attended by more than 240,000 parents, Mrs. Kerr continued. These have afforded expert instruction to mothers in child care, nutrition and hygiene and in the efficient conduct of the home. Sewing projects have produced more than 22,000,000 infants' garments which have been distributed free of charge to poor families.

Recreational facilities provided by WPA during the four and one-half year period include the construction or improvement of 10,169 playgrounds, 6,682 parks, 4,489 athletic fields and 910 swimming pools. A check of recreational activities during a single week in February revealed a total of 334,000 participant-hours at children's play centers supervised by WPA workers.

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