

Jane Addams at Hull House

The first organized activity of the settlement was a kindergarten. For adults, there were weekly informal readings of George Eliot, Hawthorne, and other classic authors. The settlement's activities expanded to include classes in handicrafts, cooking, sewing, acting, and music. By 1893, Hull House was a center with some 40 clubs, a day-care program, a gymnasium, a playground, a dispensary, and a cooperative boarding house for working girls. Each week, some 2,000 Chicagoans entered its doors to take courses and socialize with their neighbors. Jane Addams and her colleagues regularly visited the neighboring tenements in search of elderly, handicapped, or lonely individuals, and arranged transportation for them to Hull House. (Marlow, *The Great Women*, p.174-175)

Jane Addams began to see that she would have to do more than set up Hull House. She would have to expand her energies to include neighborhood, city and state reform, improve the living conditions of tenement houses, reform garbage collection and sanitation...Jane Addams also coordinated activities that led to other reforms, investigation into sweatshop conditions, [help for] newly arrived immigrants, public welfare procedures, cultural activities such as community theaters. She coordinated all these activities, publicizing their results in lectures and magazine articles. She also campaigned for women's suffrage, for world peace and for individual rights. (Marlow, p. 175)

When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, Jane Addams joined Hoover's Food Administration. For two years, she toured the country urging increased food production for the benefit of the victims of the war...After the war, Addams continued to work for international disarmament. She helped found and served as first president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In 1930, Jane Addams was co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. (Marlow, p.173-177.)



Questions for Group Activity:

1. If you closed your eyes and pictured Chicago and Hull House in the days when Jane Addams was alive, what would the scene be like? Who would be in it? What would they be doing?

2. Why do you think Hull House didn't just take care of feeding the poor in its neighborhood? Why do you believe it took on so many activities?

3. Why do you think Jane Addams was concerned about food production, international disarmament, women's suffrage and world peace when she was already busy with activities at Hull House?

