

MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

the community . . .



. . . and the community center



Rita Schwerner reads to youngsters in Meridian CORE center. She is wife of center director Michael Schwerner who was abducted or murdered.

CORE COMMUNITY CENTERS

Where a child may not use the local library because he is Negro, where a teenager may not 'hang out' in the local movies or soda joints because he is Negro, where even the dubious sophistication obtainable at a pool hall is forbidden to young men because they are Negro, where the elders and leaders of a community — merchants, farmers, ministers — usually have had limited education and experience because they are Negro, where most families are too restricted economically because they are Negro to afford the weak links to the greater society provided by television and electricity . . .

It is for these people the CORE Community Centers exist.

In this year, in 1964, a young Negro girl who has come north for an education lives in Harlem. She feels it is somehow immoral to share an apartment with a white girl who lives nearer her college. She finds it difficult to shed the distorting experience segregation has imposed. Even though her wit, intelligence, and charm have opened many doors, she cannot integrate.

But if there had been a CORE Community Center in the town where she grew up . . . ?

Why, then, she might have seen her parents line up to register at the local court house, she might have grown up knowing the spirit of hope and resistance that has inspired the people of Canton, Mississippi, where the first CORE Community Center opened in 1963. The second CORE center opened in Meridian, Mississippi, early in 1964.

Community Centers are desperately needed to destroy the old patterns of segregation. We must not lose another generation of school children to apathy and sullen resentment hidden by cheerful pretense. It is many times easier to find and ship a roomful of books to the south than it is to persuade one brainwashed girl that she has full citizenship in the human race.



WHAT IS A CORE COMMUNITY CENTER?

Ten thousand books, a ping pong table, five sewing machines, half a dozen desks, a typewriter, records and a record player, perhaps a piano and sheet music... rooms to put them in, and a few devoted people to give classes in voter registration, sewing, reading, nutrition, remedial courses, arts and crafts.

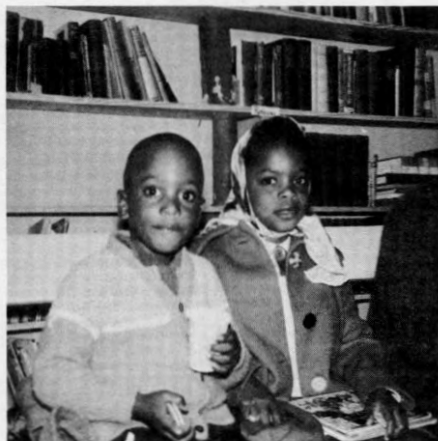
Not much? A whole new world for those it serves.

Primarily an investment in education, with most of its space and resources devoted to study, books and teaching, every center will try also to have a game room for teenagers to offset the painful effects of recreational limitation as well as those of economic and cultural deprivation.

You'll agree that this is important and worthwhile.

Recently, fabric for 110 dresses was sent by the ILGWU's Local 23-25 to Mississippi. Many of the women who learned to sew by making a dress at the community center had not had a new dress for four or five years. Their involvement in the sewing class encouraged most of them to start voter registration classes. The children who come to the center for books and remedial courses made puppets and toys with every last scrap of left-over fabric. Workers at the center are understandably proud of these results.

Books for CORE Community Centers have been collected by CORE's Southern Educational Project. National CORE has been cooperating with local groups in designing and constructing the centers. Donations of books, money, time (or any useful object) make such centers possible.



Gentlemen:

Here is my contribution of toward CORE Community Centers.

My name and address:

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- I am a CORE member I would like to join CORE.
 I wish to subscribe to the bimonthly paper, CORE-lator.

Please make check marks in the appropriate boxes above, and return to:
 CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY, 38 Park Row, New York, N. Y. 10038