

"The earliest age of childhood is the most important one for education, because the beginning decides the manner of progress and the end."—*Froebel*.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
FREE KINDERGARTEN IN PROVIDENCE,
CHARTER, BY-LAWS AND OFFICERS
OF THE
Free Kindergarten Association.

6th ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL, 1890.

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Contributions may be sent to the Treasurer, MISS ADELINE BROWN, 49
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A BRIEF ACCOUNT

—OF THE—

Free Kindergarten in Providence.

This work was begun here in 1879 by Mrs. C. M. N. Alden, in a ward room in the Fountain Street school building which had been abandoned for school purposes. Upon her personal application to the city council, the use of this room, heated and cared for by the janitor, was given to her. The money to pay the teacher and to carry on the school was raised by Mrs. Alden's persistent endeavors among the friends of the Kindergarten. A circular then issued showed that from September, 1882, to May, 1883, there were fifty children in this school, and \$408 were contributed in money, besides which contributions in kind were made by other friends.

The instances of cruel treatment of little children incidentally brought to light, gave rise to the formation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The value of the services to the community rendered by this society is well known, and is appreciated by all.

For five years this Free Kindergarten work was carried on by Mrs. Alden and the pupils of her training class, who in turn served as assistant one year and as principal the next, their services and time as assistant being deemed by Mrs. Alden an equivalent for the training. In this way a principal and assistant were secured by the payment of only one salary from the funds contributed.

The necessity for such a charity, and the means of supply, as well as the success achieved, thus being practically demonstrated, the Providence Free Kindergarten Association was then formed to continue the work and to relieve

Mrs. Alden from the burden and the responsibilities she had so generously undertaken.

During the first year of its existence the Association carried on two Free Kindergartens with entire success, one being a summer school and one a winter school. The city council gave the Association the use of a room in the Chalkstone Avenue school building for the first, and eighty children applied for admission the first morning. The Association provided the teachers and paid all the expenses of both schools, and they proved so successful that ample encouragement was given to persevere in the work undertaken.

Both schools were continued with like success the next year (1885). Upon completion of the city's new school building on Smith and Duke streets, the city council gave the Association the use of a room therein, and soon this room was filled and overflowing.

The year 1886 witnessed a great step forward in our work. The Association petitioned the city council to assume the maintenance of the Smith Street Kindergarten, and after full public hearing, upon a favorable report from the committee, the city council voted so to do, and the school was turned over to the city, and became a part of the public school system.

A lull in our work followed, lasting until 1888. It was then resolved to prepare for the maintenance of another Free Kindergarten (on Academy Avenue), and further, to apply to the General Assembly for a charter. It was now apparent that this Association is to be more than a temporary affair and therefore that we should organize under an act of incorporation. This gives definiteness and permanence to our undertaking, and enables the Association to receive gifts and bequests for permanent investment, the income to be forever used for the purposes of our organization. Therefore, on the 12th of February, 1890, the Association organized under the charter granted by the General

Assembly, transferring all its funds to the new Association, thereby entering, let us hope, into a new, stronger and fuller life and career of usefulness. In this brief account grateful mention should be made of the services of the first President, Mrs. Moses B. I. Goddard, and of the wise and constant help given by her successors, Mrs. James Tillinghast and Mrs. E. B. Andrews. And for the formation of our Association, the revival of interest, after the period of inactivity of which mention has been made, and for the present increasing usefulness of the Association, we are indebted, with this entire community, to the enthusiastic and persistent devotion of Mrs. Amasa M. Eaton. Up to this time the total receipts from 154 contributors had been \$3,425.42, and the expenditures \$3,021.26, leaving a balance in the treasury of the new corporation of \$404.16.

AN ACT

TO INCORPORATE THE PROVIDENCE FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION.

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION I. Sarah B. Tillinghast, Caroline M. N. Alden, Elizabeth B. Chace, John L. Lincoln, Thomas J. Morgan, Maude D. Eaton, Ellen G. Hunt, Hettie T. Sprague, Adeline Brown, Amasa M. Eaton, Maude D. Chace, Sarah E. H. Doyle, Adeline E. H. Slicer, Charlotte G. Cornett, Sarah E. Doyle, Helen M. Lathrop, Fanny P. Palmer, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation by the name of the Providence Free Kindergarten Association, for the purpose of introducing the Kindergarten Fröbelian method of teaching in the public schools for children too young to enter the primary schools, without regard to nationality, religion or race, and the providing of efficient and qualified teachers for this purpose,

with all the powers and privileges and subject to all the duties and liabilities set forth in Chapter 152 of the Public Statutes and in any acts in amendment thereof or in addition thereto.

SEC. 2. Said corporation may take, hold, transmit and convey real and personal estate to an amount not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars.

SEC. 3. This act shall go into effect immediately.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE I.—MEMBERSHIP.

This Association shall consist of such persons as are desirous of promoting its objects and who shall pay annually two dollars each.

ARTICLE II.—OFFICERS.

The officers shall consist of a president, six vice-presidents, a secretary, an assistant secretary, a treasurer, an assistant treasurer and a board of managers, consisting of not more than twenty-five members, including and in addition to the foregoing general officers.

ARTICLE III.—PRESIDENT.

The president shall preside at all meetings of the Association or of the board of managers, shall appoint all committees, and call special meetings. In the absence of the president, any vice-president, or, in the absence of all vice-presidents, any manager elected to the chair pro-tem may act in his place.

ARTICLE IV.—SECRETARY.

The secretary, or the assistant secretary, under the direction of the secretary, shall attend to all correspondence, keep all records, submit annual reports and issue all notices.

ARTICLE V. — TREASURER.

The treasurer, or the assistant treasurer, under the direction of the treasurer, shall receive, hold and disburse the funds of the Association, and shall submit quarterly and annual reports, which shall be audited by such a committee as the board of managers or the Association shall appoint.

ARTICLE VI. — MEETINGS.

The annual meeting of the Association shall be held on the second Wednesday in April unless otherwise ordered by the board of managers. Quarterly meetings of the board of managers shall be held on the second Wednesday in each quarter, beginning with March. Special meetings of the Association shall be called by the president, upon request in writing of ten members, and the secretary shall give notice of such special meetings by mailing a notice thereof to each member, at least forty-eight hours before said meeting. Meetings of the board of managers, other than quarterly meetings, and the hour and place for holding all meetings shall be left to the direction of the board of managers.

ARTICLE VII. — QUORUM.

A quorum of the Association shall consist of ten members, of whom at least five shall be members of the board of managers. A quorum of the board of managers shall consist of five members thereof.

ARTICLE VIII. — CHANGE IN BY-LAWS.

No change shall be made in the by-laws, unless notice of the specific change proposed be first announced in the notice of the meeting of the Association when such change is to be acted upon.

ARTICLE IX. — VACANCIES.

Any vacancy may be filled by the board of managers.

ANNUAL REPORT

Free Kindergarten Association,

APRIL 9, 1890.

The Free Kindergarten Association is about to enter upon its seventh year of existence as an organization. In presenting this report, it seems necessary to go back in time farther than a year, in order to explain to the community and particularly to the friends who have so generously given us money, the need of the continued existence of this Association, its aims and purposes. Its object, as is quite generally known, is to introduce the kindergarten method of education into the public schools for children too young to enter the primary grade. When, therefore, in the fall of 1886, the city so readily granted our petition and accepted the care and maintenance of the Kindergarten on Smith Street, which we had organized and carried on for some time, we felt that our mission was accomplished, and that the city would continue our work by establishing other kindergartens as fast as practicably. It was thought by some of the managers that any further action on the part of the Association would seem to be somewhat of the nature of interference in the work which the city had taken upon itself to do, and so in December, 1886, the executive board voted to recommend that the Association should disband and dispose of such material and furniture as it owned to the city. In February, 1887, however, the proposition to disband was reconsidered, it being deemed desirable to hold the organization together and await the future action of the city. Accordingly, from April, 1887, to October, 1888, no meetings of the Association were held and no work was

done. After the lapse of this year and a half, it became quite evident that the city would not take the initiative and establish kindergartens on its own responsibility, so it was found that this society has a work to do. We must start the kindergartens, prove by actual experiment the need for such schools, that the parents appreciate the advantages derived from them, then we should have every reason to hope that the city would assume their support. We are very glad to say that so far our hopes have been realized.

In October, 1888, the Association was asked to take charge of a Kindergarten already established on Academy Avenue, which was struggling to support itself by small sums of money given by the parents of some of the children, but chiefly by contributions from a few friends interested in the school. As the neighborhood seemed to be a suitable one in which to maintain a kindergarten, and the city was about to build a public school house in the vicinity, the Association decided to take entire control of the school from January 1, 1889, provided it came into its hands free from any debt. This school was successfully carried on during the past year, by and at the expense of the Association, and now we can with pleasure report that since the beginning of the present year the city has accepted this Kindergarten, appropriating \$200 for material for the school and \$1000 for the running expense. A third Kindergarten, in the Federal Street school house, and in charge of the city, is due also to the labors of this Association, for although we at no time supported the school, the work of ascertaining the number of children in the neighborhood of suitable age and of getting the consent of the parents to send such children to the school, together with bringing the subject before the city council, was done by members of this Association.

In April, 1889, the General Assembly passed an act incorporating the Providence Free Kindergarten Association, and in February of this year the Association met to accept the charter and organize thereunder. So much may

be said for the results of our labor in the past. As in the past, so in the future, success must depend on hard work.

Though our object is gained slowly, there are many reasons for encouragement. Especially are we indebted to those friends who have so generously given us money. Our appeals have met with a ready response. Without this aid our schools could certainly not have been maintained. Without it we cannot do what we would in the future. Again, we have been received so cordially by the gentlemen of the city government whenever we have a flourishing school to offer them, well patronized and under competent leadership, that we feel half the battle has been won. The kindergarten system of education is finding its way surely and steadily into all the large cities. An Association of influential citizens has been recently formed in New York for the purpose of establishing free Kindergartens in all quarters of that city. The value of this method of education in the development of very young children is becoming more and more recognized. Its principles lie at the foundation of industrial or manual training. It deals with children at an age when the senses are most keen and alert, and it guides those sense perceptions in systematic ways, training brain and hand to work together. In using the gifts and occupations the kindergarten introduces the child to the world of nature; in the plays and games, to the world of humanity. As the city has taken charge of the school on Academy Avenue, the Association now proposes to establish a kindergarten, as soon as possible, in some other section, hoping, that when another school shall be well organized the city will accept and support that one under the same conditions as it has the others. But, until such time, we must have money to pay the necessary expenses for teachers, furnishing and materials. This movement is for the public good, will not the people, then, in all parts of the city interested in the cause of education help us by contributing even small sums to our

treasury? The payment of \$2.00 a year constitutes membership in the Association. We believe that this organization has reason to exist, for it must maintain kindergartens at private cost, until their utility is shown and the public ask to have them incorporated into the public school system.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN G. HUNT,

Secretary.

THE
Free Kindergartens of Philadelphia,

AND HOW THEY BECAME MERGED INTO THE
SUB-PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

On the 6th of October, 1879, the first free kindergarten of Philadelphia was started, through the inspiration of Mrs. Quincy Shaw's generous example in Boston. Six persons pledged themselves to support this venture. The next June another was started among the very poor, by a single benevolent worker. The next October still another was the result of the personal initiative of a generous woman. After that, attempts in the same direction were made in various places, and the result of it all was the formation of the "Sub-Primary Society," which was incorporated in June, 1881, for the purpose of consolidation, and better efficiency in the work. All individual efforts in the line of free kindergartens were at once placed under the central and incorporated Society. From the first but little money was paid out in rents; the local school boards granting the use of rooms so far as possible in each case. In 1888, the need

for more definite supervision than volunteer and untrained visitors could give being felt, Miss Constance Mackenzie was appointed Superintendent of all the kindergartens under the charge of the Society. Altho' at first all expenses were met by voluntary contributions from private supporters of the work, as early as 1882 an appropriation was made by the city council of \$5,000 for the maintainance of kindergartens; and this money was given directly to the Sub-Primary Society for the payment of salaries of their teachers. This appropriation was repeated in 1884, and increased for 1885-'86 to \$7,500. In December, 1886 there were thirty-two free kindergartens under the management of the Sub-Primary Society of Philadelphia, supported by private contributions, assisted by the city appropriations. By that time the Board of Education had become convinced that the kindergarten was a legitimate, a useful, and a needed part of the public school work, and decided to ask the councils for a yearly and regular appropriation of \$15,000, or as much as should prove necessary, and to adopt the Sub-Primary work as a part of their own. This was speedily accomplished, and the same month saw the official transfer of all the properties and superintendency of the private society to the Public Board of Education. From the first, such transfer and ultimate end of their work had been the design of the pioneers in free kindergarten work in Philadelphia; for they recognized that the assured and permanent success of any large movement for better education rests upon its adoption as a part of the public provision for all classes of people. But the work of the Sub-Primary Society was not done; and they immediately opened a normal kindergarten training school with the hope, — since realized, we believe — that it too might become a part of the public school system. The history of Philadelphia will not be repeated in detail in the City of Providence. There, the first appropriations made by the city authorities were disbursed under the direction of the society. Here, where the

city has moved in aid of the free kindergarten work, it has been to take possession of a school already established, and to relieve the Free Kindergarten Association, both of its expense and its management. But the free use of a room for kindergartens has been granted in the case of some still supported and controlled by the Association. The experience of Boston is still farther removed from anything which can come to us in our work; for there, one magnificent generosity held the cause up until the whole community was educated to appreciation of the value of the kindergarten, and the city at one step became possessed of Mrs. Shaw's "plant" and the inheritor of her wardship and protection of the kindergartens of that great city. Here we have no Mrs. Shaw; neither have we had at command as, for several years the Sub-Primary Society of Philadelphia had, large contributions to our work from the city council, unrestricted by rules as to its disbursement. But we have here a beginning, actual and hopeful, if small, of kindergarten work directly under the control of the city itself. The work of the Free Kindergarten Association, here, is therefore that of a handmaid and conduit to the public provision for kindergartens. The Association stands pledged first, last and always, to aid the school authorities in the stimulation of sentiment in the line of this work for the youngest children of our city; and to hasten the increase of public kindergartens, by opening and sustaining as many as possible, and keeping them in good condition for transfer to the school board, and as speedily as said board can receive public support, in assuming the charge. Recent city legislation has been of an encouraging sort in this direction; and the Association is assured of the most intelligent and helpful counsel and aid from the Superintendent of Schools. Hence all that is needed is to rouse the people generally to a fitting sense of the need for the kindergarten as an integral part of the public school system, to witness here as wonderful an enthusiasm for it as took possession of Philadel-

phia, and led to the speedy merging of the private movement into the increased work of the Board of Education. The work of the Free Kindergarten Association will not be done until there are "Sub-Primaries" attached to every primary in the city, and until there is ample provision in school buildings and in the teaching force for the proper care of all the youngest children of Providence; and also, until there shall be established, upon a secure and permanent basis, a first-class training school for kindergartners for the public schools. In this latter end we have the immense help of enthusiastic support from the able head of our Normal School, himself a valuable member of the Association. When this full provision is made for the little ones by the public school authorities, this Association can retire from the field; until then it asks for generous and intelligent support from the citizens of Providence.

TESTIMONY OF TEACHERS.

"I like to have children from the kindergarten, for they have ideas."

"When I give the children new work to do, the children from the kindergarten take it immediately, and do the best they can; whereas, the other children simply say, 'I can't,' and it is very hard to get them to make even an attempt to do it."

"I wish all of the children went to the kindergarten before they came here."

"If a child does particularly well, I often say, 'I guess you have been to the kindergarten,' and almost invariably the answer is, yes."

In a free kindergarten, pathos and mirth jostle each other, and even walk hand in hand. I have under my care just now the dearest little fellow—who daily bears witness of this fact. One morning, not long ago, he brought for

his lunch one little cookie. He was very hungry, I know — yet his first thought was not for himself; looking all around the tables, he spied a little girl who had nothing to eat. Instantly a tiny hand was raised, and the sweet voice said: “Please, I want to give her (pointing with his finger) some of my cookie; may I?” On receiving the desired permission, he joyfully carried the *larger* part of his cookie to the little girl, then returned to his seat with a satisfied air, saying to me, as he passed, “There, she’s got some now, ain’t she?” Often, seeing some of the children out of order, he goes to them and tells them what to do; then says, “I mustn’t do that any more, either.” Whether the day be dark or bright, he carries the sunshine always in his eyes. But this child is an exception, not the rule — else kindergartening were but a pastime. Many quaint conceits run through these childish brains — as for instance, that the rain is poured from the sky through a hose-pipe; that the stars run away somewhere in the daytime, and then climb back up into the sky again at night; that grapes grow on trees, and so on. That both parents and children appreciate the kindergarten, is made manifest in many ways. A man told me one morning when the rain was pouring down, (as he handed his little girl in at the door) “There! She would come. I tried to hire her to stay at home to-day, because her shoes leaked so, but she cried so hard that I had to bring her.” At another time, a mother said, “My boy misses the kindergarten so much, since we moved; he was so happy here!” Not long ago, some one told me that one of our children who had been with us some time, was not only a lesson to her own family, but to the neighborhood, in many ways. Of course there is a reverse side to this bright picture — children whose moral and spiritual powers lie dormant — but time and patience seldom fail to kindle the spark, and many little ones with whom their parents confess, that they have much trouble at home, yield to the kind, firm rule of the kindergarten.

TESTIMONY OF PARENTS.

“The other day, George wanted to make a kite, and I told him he did not know how, but he said, yes, he could do it. I gave him some paper and paste, and you would be surprised to see how neatly and well he did it. I told mother he got all that at the kindergarten. He is always making little things.”

“I feel as though I would like to give something to the kindergarten, it has done so much for my boy.”

When it was time for one little boy to go into the public school, his older sister came and said, “My mother thanks you for all you have done for Jacob.”

The idea that the children can be made to mind through love of the right, seems to make a great impression upon some of the parents, and the remark is constantly made, “It must take a great deal of patience! How do you do it?”

“John is such a little gentleman since he went to the kindergarten. He tells us all what we must do, and what we must not.”

The children are constantly making remarks like the following:

“I wish I could stay all day.”

“I wish I could stay all day and all night.”

“I wish I could live here and sleep here all the time.”

“Why don't you have kindergarten in the afternoon, too?”