

# **Finding aid for the Family Service Association records Collection 382**

**Finding aid prepared by Julie Tabberer**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

May 19, 2013

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

June 2011

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator</b>	Family Service Association.
<b>Title</b>	Family Service Association records
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1893-1970s
<b>Extent</b>	4.0 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Family Service Association (FSA) was a social service agency operating in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area from the late 1800s through the 1990s. The organization was also known as the Charity Organization Society and the Social Welfare Association. This collection documents the activities of the agency through minutes, annual reports, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks and correspondence. The collection includes a range of information pertaining to the FSA and to social services in the area in general. The newspaper clippings in particular reference a wide range of social service related topics in the Grand Rapids and Kent County area. In addition, the collection contains extensive information pertaining to the FSA's involvement with the Mental Health Act in the early 1960s.</p>

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## Biographical/Historical note

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The Family Service Association, then known as the Charity Organization Society, was formally organized in April 1893. The organization, the first of its kind in the Grand Rapids area, stated that its purpose was “to prevent pauperism, to prevent duplication of relief giving [and] to prevent unwise giving and fraud.” Formed in a time of financial distress, the society provided food, wood for fuel, clothing, temporary lodging and medicine - generally in return for labor. Over the coming years, the services expanded to include classes, employment assistance, legal aid, loans and a nursing program. In 1913, the name was changed to the Social Welfare Association and in the early 1920's to the Family Service Association. In 1921, the program became a member of the Family Service Association of America.

Through the early 1900s, the agency expanded its offerings to meet the needs of the community. Added services shifted towards providing support to families, including marital counseling and mental health care. In addition, the rural community was focused on beginning in the early 1920s, with a rural program officially established in 1946. The FSA also provided essential support through the Great Depression. With the establishment of the Social Security Act in 1935, the focus of the agency continued to shift towards assisting people in taking advantage of opportunities rather than providing financial aid. The agency provided case counseling and general support services to families that were struggling.

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## Scope and Contents note

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The Family Service Association collection provides records from the administrative level of the organization from the 1890s through the 1960s. The organizational records include annual reports, extensive meeting minutes, informational manuals and staff handbooks. Newspaper articles pertaining to the organization and other ephemera are located throughout the scrapbooks.

The organizational records offer a detailed look at the operations of the agency, from broad planning and administration to day to day functions and staff procedures. The collection also provides a look at the larger picture of social service in the Grand Rapids area. The collection is a resource for studying the history of public and private social organizations in Grand Rapids, the evolution of social work and social perception. The scrapbooks and minutes provide historical views towards poverty, homelessness, race issues, mental illness and gender issues, among other topics. Numerous statistical data is also included throughout the records.

Also included in the collection is a series of documents pertaining to the Community Mental Health Act in Michigan in the early 1960s. The Community Mental Health Act of 1963 was a federal legislation that called for the establishment of community based mental health services. In effect, the act led to broad deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. At the local level, the handling of the act was assigned to the United Community Service. Ms. Virginia Woodman, director of the FSA at the time, participated

in the committee convened to study the act and its effects on mental health care in Grand Rapids and Kent County. Ms. Woodman also served on a committee pertaining to the act at the state level. Included in this collection are correspondence, meeting minutes, guidance documents and surveys of local organizations. The series is a good source of information regarding the perception and implementation of the Community Mental Health Act, as well as the state of mental health care at the time.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department June 2011

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Family Service Association, accession number 1993.022.

### **Processing Information note**

Many of the documents, especially the scrapbooks, are in fragile condition.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Genre(s)**

- records (documents)

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### **Subject(s)**

- Charities -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Family services -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Mental health services -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

## Series I. Organizational Records

## Collection Inventory

### Series I. Organizational Records

#### Scope and Contents note

Includes by-laws, annual reports, handbooks and meeting minutes for various committees (Board of Directors, Central Council, Vacation, Annual Meeting, Executive, Finance, Housing, Co-Operation, Case, House, Program, Nominating, Legal Aid Bureau). The Case Committee minutes at times offer detailed information pertaining to particular cases, including background and how the case was handled.

A pledge book (Contributions for Organization) notes contributions towards the founding of the organization. Included are names, amount of pledges, residence and business address. Several prominent residents of Grand Rapids are listed in the pledge book.

The annual reports (1893-1907) provide detailed information pertaining to organizational objectives, officers, committee members, finances, donations, demographics, service statistics (including marital status, age, nationality, cause of need, decisions, causes of sickness, etc). The 1900-1902 report includes photographs of the COS building.

Several Manuals for Members of the Board of Director's include broad organizational information such as history and operations of the FSA, description of services, statistics, finances, budget, job descriptions, personnel policies and salary scale. Two staff handbooks include the agency purpose and by-laws, personnel policies, forms, a list of other agencies and descriptions of job routines.

Other documents in this series include property transaction records for a cottage in the Shore Acres plat in the Grand Haven area (1920s), an Agency Self Evaluation (1954) and organizational newsletters (1970s).

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Contributions for Organization 1893-1905	1	1

## Series I. Organizational Records

Annual Reports, COS 1893-1907	6	x
Records of COS 1893-1900	6	x
Records of COS 1900-1908	6	x
Records of COS 1908-1911	6	x
Meeting Minutes 1911-1912	1	2
Meeting Minutes 1912-1913	1	3
Meeting Minutes 1913-1915	1	4
Meeting Minutes 1915-1917	1	5
Meeting Minutes 1918-1923	1	6
Meeting Minutes 1923-1930	1	7
Shore Acres property transaction records 1926-1928	5	12
Corporate Records, Part 1: By-laws, Meeting Minutes 1924-1941	2	1
Corporate Records, Part 2 1924-1941	2	2
Board Meeting Minutes 1941-1949	2	3



**Series II. Scrapbooks**

Board Meeting Minutes 1950-1954	2	4
Agency Self Evaluation Project 1954	2	5
Staff Meeting Minutes 1954-1963	2	6
Manual for Members of Board of Directors (Copy One) 1950s	2	7
Manual for Members of Board of Directors (Copy Two) 1950s	2	8
Manual for Members of Board of Directors (Copy Three) 1950s	3	1
Manual for Members of Board of Directors (Copy Four) 1950s	3	2
Manual for Members of Board of Directors (Copy Five) 1950s	3	3
Handbook (Copy One) 1953	3	4
Handbook (Copy Two) 1953	3	5, 6
The Fountain Pen (newsletter) 1974-1975	3	7

**Series II. Scrapbooks****Scope and Contents note**

The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, ephemera and a few photographs. The primary focus of the scrapbooks is on newspaper clippings. The clippings include articles pertaining to the organization and articles on general social issues in the Grand Rapids area. The bulk of the clippings are from the 1890s

## Series II. Scrapbooks

through the 1910s and the late 1930s through the 1950s. Overall, the clippings date from the 1890s through the 1970s.

	<b>Box</b>	
Scrapbook 1897-1900		7
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Loose Papers, Scrapbook, 1897-1900	7	1
		<b>Box</b>
Scrapbook 1902-1911		7
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Loose Papers, Scrapbook, 1902-1911	7	2
Newspaper Clippings (Fragile) 1921	5	1
Scrapbook 1936-1940	5	2
Scrapbook 1940-1944	5	3
Scrapbook 1944-1956	5	4
Loose Items, Scrapbook 1944-1956	5	5
		<b>Box</b>
Scrapbook 1957-1970		7
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>

**Series III. Newsletters**

Loose Papers, Scrapbook, 1957-1970	7	3
75th Anniversary Scrapbook 1968	7	4
Scrapbook 1970-1976	7	5
Photographs and negatives, undated (Leonard Street building groundbreaking)	5	6

**Series III. Newsletters****Scope and Contents note**

Included in this series are newsletters from other organizations. The newsletters include:

Channels, published by the National Public Relations Council of Health & Welfare Services

Newsletter, National Council on Family Relations

Newsletter, Michigan Welfare League

Legislative Bulletin, published by the Michigan Welfare League

The Legislative Bulletin dates from the same time period as Series IV (Mental Health Act), and is loosely related to it.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Channels newsletter 1962-1963	5	7
Channels newsletter 1963-1965	5	8
Miscellaneous Newsletters 1963-1964	5	9

**Series IV: Mental Health Act**

Michigan Welfare League Legislative Bulletin 1963-1965	5	10
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**Series IV: Mental Health Act****Scope and Contents note**

This series includes correspondence, minutes, reports and statistics relating to implementation of the Community Mental Health Act of 1963. The series contains minutes that focus on the Grand Rapids area specifically and also minutes from state level committees. The state wide guidance documents pertaining to the Act are also included.

**Subseries A: Correspondence**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
FSA Correspondence and Memos 1960-1964	4	1
United Community Service Correspondence and Minutes 1963-1964	4	2

**Subseries B: Technical Documents and Statistics**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Mental Health Planning in Michigan 1963	4	3
Official Rules and Regulations 1964	4	4
Guide for Agencies Consulted 1964	4	5

**Scope and Contents note**

**Subseries C: Meeting Minutes**

Questionnaires completed by Grand Rapids Consultation Center, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Kent Oaks Hospital, Grand Rapids Child Guidance Center, Kent County Mental Health Center and Butterworth Hospital.		
Statistics on Mental Health Care early 1960s	4	6
Technical Documents on Mental Health Care early 1960's	4	7
<b>Subseries C: Meeting Minutes</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Technical Consulting Committee 1964	4	8
Task Force on Mental Health Statutes 1964	4	9
Task Force on Community Mental Health Services 1964	4	10
Patient Resources Subcommittee, Task Force on Mental Health Statutes, undated	4	11
Task Force on Emotionally Disturbed Children 1964	4	12
Task Force on the Elderly, Mentally Frail 1964	4	13
Task Force on Research 1964	4	14
Task Force on In-Patient Psychiatric Services 1964	4	15

**Subseries D: Miscellaneous**

Task Force on Mental Retardation 1963-1964	4	16
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Task Force on Manpower 1964	4	17
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**Subseries D: Miscellaneous**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Miscellaneous	4	18

**Series V. Miscellaneous**

**Scope and Contents note**

Two theses written about the organization and miscellaneous papers.

	<b>Box</b>
A Family Service Agency's Expansion Program (Thesis)	6

Changes in Service offered by Family Service Agency of Kent County, Michigan (Thesis)	6
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	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Miscellaneous - Including obituaries for Julius H. Amberg	5	11