1950

Home Economics Division Provides Service For Iowa Homemakers

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IOWA HOMEMAKERS are as much students at Iowa State as we who attend classes on the campus. That’s the way the faculty of the Division of Home Economics feels about the thousands of Iowa women it serves daily through extensive service programs.

You, as campus students, are acquainted with the division as a medium through which you get your education. But besides their teaching duties, the home economics faculty spends an amazing amount of time and effort in serving Iowans through special programs set up for that purpose, and through regular departmental activities.

Homemaker short courses, field days, tours and conferences are the special “classes” arranged on the campus for Iowa women to attend and receive home economics information.

Short courses and field days are arranged for homemakers at the same time that their husbands are coming to agricultural short courses. The day-long programs may include talks, demonstrations, panels or films on various phases of home economics. Items of general interest, such as the advantages of exercise and the use of pictures in the home, may also be presented. There is no registration fee for these short courses that are planned and given by members of the faculty. In the past a 2-day homemaker conference offered in a more extensive way much the same material as the shorter field days.

Tours Arranged

You’ve probably often seen and wondered about the groups of women who visit Home Economics Hall and peek in on your classes. Any group of women may arrange for tours through the building by indicating what departments and work they would like to see. Faculty committees then arrange and conduct the tours so the women may get the information they want.

A part of the planned service program of the division for future students and future homemakers is high school “Career Days.” Every year many of the high schools of the state sponsor “Career Days” as part of a guidance program in vocational selection. Representatives from the home economics division speak to the high school students.

Prof. Gladys Olson, of the Department of Education, is chairman of a faculty committee who train staff members to go out to the high schools as representatives of professional fields of home economics.

“We help the girls recognize the many fields in home economics and the qualities needed for those fields,” says Prof. Olson. “Each staff member touches on all the departments with the help of charts, bulletins and movies. Our programs are arranged to help girls who will not be able to go to college as well as those who can afford professional training.”

Martha Duncan Speaks

Five days a week homemakers all over the state receive college information through Martha Duncan’s Homemaker’s Half Hour broadcast over Radio Station WOL. You’ve probably all heard that familiar voice say, “Good morning Ed Wegener, and good morning to you!” Then Martha makes a few informal comments of her own, and gives the food items for the day. The radio show is a true service of the division. Faculty members prepare and present discussions on topics of interest to the homemakers from their respective departments. Sometimes the script is written in dialogue form to include Martha. The discussions may be on whole grain cereals, crease-resistant treatments for rayons, or the use of cleaning reagents. Gardening and the care of chickens also have weekly spots on the program.

The numerous letters that come to Martha Duncan are evidences that the radio show is popular with women from all over Iowa and segments of bordering states. Some are just to chat, while others are requests. Factual questions are referred to the proper department and all are answered—even how to dye a fur coat!

Martha and her secretary, a staff member, personally answer all the other mail that comes to their office-radio studio which is tucked away in a sound-proofed third floor corner of Home Economics Hall. For over 23 years the radio show has been a part of the division. It has been guided and voiced by different faculty women. The name Martha Duncan originated with Mrs. Eleanor Wilkins, director of the program since 1943.

The Women’s Forum, an afternoon radio show also under the direction of Martha Duncan, is a service for organizations who have general information to share with radio listeners. Martha says this program is flexible, for if there is no scheduled speaker, and a (Continued on page 18)
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campus guest is in the building she frequently asks him to speak. Otherwise, Martha herself talks about the campus or students. Here she performs a special service to you by occasionally suggesting to your parents to write a long letter or send a box of food.

In addition to these planned service programs each department is a little service organization in itself—some through a regular schedule, and others in response to requests.

The Department of Child Development with its nursery school performs a constant service to busy parents who recognize the value of nursery school education. Established with the department about 25 years ago, the nursery school is primarily a laboratory for undergraduate students and an education service for approximately sixty 2 to 5 year-olds. The school also serves some high school classes from surrounding communities who come to observe the children in connection with their child development class work.

For those parents whose children are in the nursery school, there is the Parents School Program which consists of regular conferences of individual parents and staff members, visits of teachers to children's homes, and quarterly group meetings of parents and staff. The purpose of the program is for both groups to better understand the behavior of the children by discussions, panels, speakers or movies.

Prof. Edith Sunderlin, of the Department of Child Development, is the "Story Lady" who daily presents a story on the TV,minute "Children's Corner" program over Radio Station WOI.

In connection with the University of Iowa and Iowa State Teachers College, various staff members represent Iowa State on a twice-weekly child development program over radio station WSUI. In dialogue form, helpful information on rearing children is broadcast and sent out in mimeographed form to child study groups in the state.

Requests Answered

Another department that receives many requests is institution management. That departmental staff is constantly kept busy answering requests for help in planning new church, hospital or school kitchens. Aid in planning large parties or menus for special occasions and quantity buying are other frequent requests.

A summer short course to train school lunch cook-managers in planning and serving meals to the best advantage is a service project of the institution management department that is co-sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction. And, active in the work of the Iowa and American Dietetics Association, the faculty distributes information about dietetics.

These two departments are certainly not the only ones that play a part in the service of the Division of Home Economics. The other departments of textiles and clothing, applied art, home management, household equipment, foods and nutrition, and home economics education all have an equal share in answering the numerous requests of Iowa homemakers who have learned to depend upon their state college for help with their specific and general problems.