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Learn All to Do All

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"Any question may be asked and all must be answered" warn Extension grads

Learn All to Do All

by Alvina Iverson

THE YOUNG woman who graduates from college and becomes a home demonstration agent steps into a challenging position. Her personal character must be an inspiration to the people with whom she works and she must have a complete knowledge of everything from making a flat-felled seam to refinishing grandmother's walnut chair.

The work of a home demonstration agent means directing the work of rural women and girls in extension activities, conducting training schools for the women and planning a broad program for the rural girls in their 4-H activities. More specifically it means checking club programs of the county, having charge of all communication to 4-H leaders and girls, handling publicity for extension activities, conducting training schools in each township on the main and subsidiary projects, attending meetings of 4-H clubs in each township and planning for such special events as 4-H Achievement Shows, banquets, contests, Rally Days, state convention, summer camps, state and county fairs, home project achievement days, drama tournaments and other events associated with a particular county.

In order to be successful in such work, Mrs. Edith Barker, state leader of 4-H girls, believes that in addition to a well-grounded knowledge of home economics subject matter the potential home demonstration agent should have a sympathetic understanding of human problems. "Her specialty is people. She must like to work with people, understand them and be able to inspire them to assume positions of leadership. She herself must have leadership without being aggressive; must possess courage, tenacity and faith."

Iowa State graduates who are now home demonstration agents advise college women to "take good notes, keep them in good order and learn all you can from every course you take."

Edith Bass, home demonstration

agent in Emmet County, writes, "I can't overemphasize the need for getting every bit of available subject matter in every course taken in home economics. At best an agent can't



know everything, but she will quickly lose the confidence of her women and girls if they find she seems to know very little or if they find she is often mistaken."

Home demonstration agents also realize the value of the social sciences. Sociology, psychology and courses dealing with family relationships have proved valuable aids to extension workers. Miss Ella Loughran, assistant state 4-H leader, feels that in addition as many education courses as possible should be taken in college.

Miss Gladys Adams, clothing specialist, feels that courses in public speaking are of utmost importance. "A person not only needs to know her subject matter but she must be able to present it forcibly and in an interesting way."

Frances Hettler, home demonstration agent in Poweshiek County, is one of the many girls who stress courses in journalism as worthwhile electives. The agent has to write many news stories and knowing how to do so effectively is the difference between "publicity" and "good publicity." Miss Hettler also adds that since much emphasis is being placed on conservation,

courses dealing with trees, flowers, birds and fish would be worthwhile.

Since home demonstration agents are often called on to lead community singing or organize musical productions, an appreciation of music is essential. Any course which leads to a wider aesthetic appreciation can be used to advantage. In addition courses in family finance, adult evening school methods, work on compiling statistics and filing, hygiene and physical education have been or would have been beneficial to home demonstration agents.

Extra-curricular activities are invaluable to the person who plans to do extension work. Mary Martin, home demonstration agent in Muscatine County, feels that working with people in activities is a good background for working with people in extension. She also stresses the importance of activities in learning how to handle meetings. Blanche Brobeil, Boone County, also advises to take advantage of every college activity which gives contact with groups of people. "One cannot have too much experience working with people." Miss Brobeil has also made good use of work in dramatic activities in helping rural people find means of creative expression through drama.

As one of the young women advised, "Please don't tell all that the work of a home demonstration agent includes or many of them will get scared out." I don't believe, however, that any potential home demonstration agents will be scared out because they are looking forward to just this kind of work. Each day holds something different for the home demonstration agent. Her work calls for the best which she can give. They'll like their work and the people with whom they work. They can look forward to a position which gives genuine pleasure and enjoyment through work and service. Who could ask for more?