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American Schools Hit Wartime Stride

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Hit Wartime Stride

Joyce Curley tells how public school children are taking an active part in war's activities

WITH vim and vigor American school children are mobilizing from a peace to a wartime program.

Designed to organize American school children for more effective participation in war service, the Junior Victory Corps and the High School Victory Corps are encouraging the correlation of a war program to the regular school program and preparing youth for active participation in war service and in the community's war effort.

In the high school corps the Community Service Division is devoted to preliminary preparation for work in the community or other service occupation such as teaching, social work, child care, home nursing and nutrition.

Home economics is of special interest to most of the girls and they are discovering that the home is one of the most vital centers of activity in the war effort. Nutrition, conservation of foods and clothing and home nursing are just a few of the phases of home economics which are vital to winning the war.

The Ames High School home economics department under the direction of Miss Florence Adolph serves as an example of an intensive and thorough home economics war program. Their education program is essentially divided into three parts—elementary, secondary and adult.

The elementary phase of the program follows the "All Out" Iowa Elementary Nutrition Plan as set forth by the State Department of Public Instruction. Its work begins in the kindergarten. Good health and nutrition habits are presented in the form of simple illustrated stories and posters which the children can understand.

In the first, second and third grades the children learn more about good health by reading such stories as "Too Thin Johnny," "Patsy's Day" and "The Milk You Drink." Some of the classes keep food charts showing the daily food needs. Each time a student eats one of the necessary foods, he puts a star on his chart. Stories which include material on good health habits are dramatized and simple posters are made by some of the students showing good eating habits.

The fourth, fifth and sixth grade children are shown movies which emphasize good health and nutrition. For the benefit of the children who do not like plain milk, they are taught how to make simple milk drinks and milk desserts.

The secondary phase of the program is carried out by the homemaking classes in high school. All the foods work is coordinated with the various government programs. One week the girls studied the share-the-meat program. For a home project, each of the girls determined how much meat her family should have and then planned the meals accordingly.

To prove that people can still have cookies in spite of wartime restrictions, the homemaking classes have baked cookies using sugar substitutes, fewer eggs and fat substitutes such as peanut butter, oleomargarine and lard.

An advanced homemaking class is learning how to conserve their clothes. They are studying make-over problems in clothing construction and are learning how to rejuvenate their old dresses.

The boys of Ames High, not to be outdone by the girls, have two homemaking classes of their own. For one week they planned the meals for the school cafeteria, applying what they had learned in class about nutrition and meal planning. The boys have been studying the selection and care of clothes.

Because the activities of the High School Victory Corps are more numerous and complicated, there are five special service divisions other than the general membership division and all have their special insignia. These five special services are Air Service, Land Service, Sea Service, Production Service and Community Service.

Members of the service divisions take preliminary preparation for activity in each respective branch of the armed services. The student who is in the Air Service Division has his course in school arranged accordingly—he takes science and mathematics, military drill, a thorough physical education program and a course in aeronautic pre-flight training.

Students in the Production Service Division begin preparation for service in war industry, agriculture or other necessary productive occupations. Subjects in agriculture would interest some of the boys, while others might take courses in mechanics to prepare themselves to take their places in war industries after graduation.

The Junior Victory Corps, organized for elementary schools, encourages the correlation of a war program to the regular school program. Class work and activities are different from what they were in normal times. Students cooperate in all salvage campaigns.

In geography class, students are learning to trace the routes of transport ships and the location of our fighting forces on maps and globes. In language classes students are getting practical letter-writing experience by writing to soldiers in the service.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor, Supt. L. A. Steger of the Ames Public Schools called a meeting of his staff to discuss how local schools could serve in the war emergency. Discussions were held with students, teachers and parents and their suggestions were compiled into a pamphlet, "Onward to Victory—A Handbook of Suggestions for the Schools During the War."