Fellowship Winners Practice Fourfold Living

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Each year the Danforth Foundation, for the training of American youth in the ideals of Christian leadership, awards a sophomore and a senior from Iowa State and many other home economics schools a 2 weeks camp experience in Michigan. The senior receives an additional 2 weeks trip to St. Louis. Harriet Breckenridge and Martha Coover represented Iowa State.

Stroking baby chinchillas, visiting a meat packing plant and experimental farm and attending the outdoor opera in St. Louis were among the experiences of 36 Danforth Fellowship girls this summer.

Designed to illuminate opportunities in professional home economics and to further develop the ideals of Christian leadership, the program made every minute valuable. We were all home economics seniors, each representing a different state, and learned much from each other about colleges and college life throughout the United States, from Maine to Oregon and Minnesota to Texas.

The Ralston Purina Company was our host for two weeks in St. Louis. Our additional two weeks at Camp Minwanca, Shelby, Michigan, were made possible by the Danforth Foundation. Mr. William H. Danforth, founder of both organizations, gives the annual fellowships because of his active interest in developing leadership in youth. A similar program for agriculture seniors gave Philip Gibbs Iowa State’s 1945 agriculture fellowship.

Our group lived in McMillan Hall, the girls’ dormitory on the Washington University campus in St. Louis. My roommates were from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The first two days we visited the 540-acre Ralston Purina Experimental Farm southwest of St. Louis. It was here that we stroked the baby chinchillas. The soft-furred animals are the objects of feeding experiments. Their house is a former water reservoir, in which a fairly constant temperature is maintained by the concrete underground structure. Minks, silver foxes and martens also are raised for breeding and feeding experiments. Rabbits, both for angora wool and for meat are raised for experimentation. Housed in one of the dog kennels is a husky from the team Admiral Byrd drove from his ship to the South Pole.

We also saw the more conventional farm animals, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, hogs, chickens, ducks and turkeys. Hens’ eggs with green yolks proved that feed ingredients affect the eggs. Green fat-soluble dye had been added to the feed; when the eggs were hatched the chick had slightly green fat.

Although it is an experimental farm, emphasis is placed on procedures of feeding, breeding and sanitation which the average farmer can practice.

Good examples of the rigid sanitation program were the disinfecting mats at the doors to the animal pens and the scrubbed rafters in the hog barns.

In St. Louis again we spent several days touring their biological laboratories and increasing our knowledge of nutrition. A trip through a newspaper plant and a broadcast over a St. Louis radio station began our visits to other points of interest.

The intricacies of a grain exchange were explained to us one morning as we watched the quotations come in on the teletype and added to the constantly-changing figures on the huge blackboard on one wall of the building. The speaker’s rostrum and the gay murals on the ceiling of the bidding room are ever-present reminders that the grain exchange is located in one of the first auditoriums of St. Louis.

The Chamber of Commerce conducted a tour through Forest Park, where we visited the Art Museum, Lindbergh trophies and the famous monkey show at the St. Louis Zoo.

A day behind the scenes of a large department store revealed the opportunities for home economics-trained women in the fashion, food service and home furnishings departments of such organizations.

To help us gain more self-confidence during job-application interviews, each of us was given an opportunity to be interviewed by the director of women’s personnel of the Ralston Purina Company.

Our day at Barnes General Hospital was especially interesting. We watched a stomach operation for an hour and a doctor explained and answered our questions. We saw the kitchens where 5,000 meals a day were prepared for patients and hospital staff. We saw the ward kitchens, where the patients’ trays are prepared, and we ate in the employees’ cafeteria.

A tiny platinum needle of radium salts was shown to us in the X-ray rooms. In the clinic were displayed wax models of food servings. These models help in teaching discharged patients the kinds of food required for special diets.

We heard the story behind the advertisement and radio commercial at an advertising agency the next...
day. Home economists play a major part in writing copy for food, fashion and homemaker's advertisements of all types. We also visited the test kitchen from which the Mary Lee Taylor homemakers' broadcasts are made.

A meat packing plant was next on the agenda. Covered with over-sized men's white cotton coats, we alternately sweltered and shivered as we went from the animal processing floor to the refrigerated meat-cutting rooms, from ham-smoking ovens to the storage lockers. Practically every process was included in the tour, even steak dinners. Work in a test kitchen and as a home economist for a meat packing company was discussed by Marye Adams, '42, home economist for the Mayrose Test Kitchen.

A tour of a candy factory, with sampling encouraged, made us realize how different making candy for thousands can be from cooking a batch of fudge for the family some Sunday night. We discovered that the assorted swirls on chocolates indicate the kind of centers to the candy workers.

One evening we saw "The Firefly" at the outdoor opera in Forest Park. Another evening we joined the shouting crowd at Sportsman's Park to see the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Brooklyn Dodgers.

The time in St. Louis ended all too soon, when Mr. Earl A. Sindecuse, Ralston Purina Educational Director who had conducted our program so smoothly, saw us off to camp.

There we were assigned to different tents to become acquainted with many more girls of high school and college age from every part of the country. Our schedule included classes with outstanding Christian leaders—Dr. William H. Hutchins, president emeritus of Oberlin and Berea Colleges; Dr. O. W. Warmingham, of the American Youth Foundation; Dr. A. H. Lowe, Minneapolis minister; Miss Ruth Seabury, internationally known youth worker; Miss Marie Shaver, Assistant Director of the American Youth Foundation, and Mr. Danforth.

Impressive vesper services were conducted each evening on the top of Vesper Dune, where we watched the sun set over Lake Michigan.

One of the outstanding camp experiences was the 15 minute quiet meditation period which we observed every morning. I, like several others, had a favorite spot on the dunes for this. Intramural games and swimming and boating every afternoon added to our sun tans and called attention to muscles we'd forgotten we had.

Four-fold living, physical, mental, social and religious, are stressed in every way possible at Miniwanca. A well-balanced life in all these phases in order to be a better citizen and leader is the aim of the Founder campers.

News of the atomic bombings reached us just as we were preparing to come home. While I was in Chicago the Japanese surrender was announced. This was an outstanding climax to a month of new knowledge, inspiration and fellowship.