1951

You'll Like Home Management

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Recommended Citation
Pitzer, Mary Kay (1951) "You'll Like Home Management," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 31 : No. 4 , Article 5.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol31/iss4/5

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HOME MANAGEMENT had me scared for three years. When I was a freshman I shrugged off my worries with, "By the time I'm a senior and have taken all those home ec courses I'll surely feel prepared for it." But suddenly I was a senior and I still didn't feel capable of coping with all the jobs I'd have to perform. Housekeeping and laundering didn't worry me, I thought I could handle that; and I even looked forward to caring for the baby, but the cooking! How could I ever satisfy nine hungry people who depended on me for three meals a day?

So it was with a feeling of, "Well it's here, we'll just have to do the best we can," that I moved into Richards House for the first session of summer school.

First Meeting
At 4 p.m. we held our first meeting on the porch. There were nine of us including our adviser, Mrs. Gallagher, who was here for this one session from the University of Minnesota. Rosalie Blomquist, Nan McLennan, Mary Ellen Jones and Jean Herchenroder were graduating at the end of the session while Gay Wood, Dorothy Maitland, Barb Beck and I had another year to go. Afterwards we used to laugh about this meeting. All on our best behavior, we were trying to make a good impression and our conversation was stilted and extra-polite. That changed soon enough!

Soon we had chosen our first jobs and had decided on the duties and sequence of jobs. Each group of girls set up its own system of running the house based on the girls' ideas of how it could best be run smoothly to fit their schedules and preferences. Then in weekly house meetings any problems were discussed and ironed out smoothly.

My first job was assistant baby director, and the next afternoon I went down to Des Moines to bring home Freddy, the center of attraction for his nine mothers during the next six weeks. Freddy was five months old, a veteran home management baby, and truly a remarkable child according to all the occupants of Richards House. I hadn't had much contact with persons of his age before and was surprised to find how natural and easy it was to care for him. He didn't seem nearly as delicate and fragile as I had imagined. Giving him a bath soon came to be the highlight of the day instead of the awesome and fearful task I had anticipated.

Self-Regulation Schedule
Like all home management babies, Freddy was on a self-regulation feeding schedule which meant that he awoke and was ready for food anywhere from 4:30 to 6:30 a.m. Freddy liked his formula and wanted to be fed right away no monkey business. He could let out some lusty yells to prove his point.

Each night it was the baby director's job to make the formula for the following day. Fewer things have ever made me feel more maternal that bustling around the kitchen in a big apron measuring out the dextromaltose, milk and water and then putting the filled bottles in the sterilizer.

Clean Houses
There's an old story that says, "Any food dropped on the floor of a home management house is perfectly all right to eat—home management houses are really kept clean." With two housekeepers and a beautifully equipped cleaning closet, it was an easy job. A cleaning clinic at the beginning of the session taught us the use of each piece of equipment and the correct procedure to use in cleaning. Then it was up to each housekeeper and her assistant to plan their daily cleaning sequence and the "extra-special" job they would do at the end of their period. Even with nine active people living in our family we didn't need to worry about unexpected company finding dust under the rug.

There are few things that give a greater sense of accomplishment than seeing your completed washing out on the line, unless it's that same washing after it
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by Mary Kay Pitzer
Technical Journalism Senior

November, 1951

has been ironed and put away. That's why the job of laundress was one of my favorites. Since all of Freddy's washing, the table linens and towels, both the dish and bath varieties, were done by the laundress, an almost daily washing was necessary. The first time we used a full sized tablecloth I groaned to myself thinking of the job of ironing that. Then I learned that table cloths, while washed by the laundress, were sent out with the sheets to be ironed at the laundry.

Weather Problems

The job was not without its frustrations however. "What's the weather report?" was the important question and even armed with that knowledge, I sometimes found myself scurrying to change the clothes to the basement when threatening clouds appeared from nowhere.

Moving up from the basement laundry room, my next job found me in the kitchen as assistant cook. That was fun. Not feeling the responsibility of each meal resting too heavily on my shoulders, I could have a fine time helping to prepare the food and learn the lay of the land in the kitchen. And was I thankful for that! For one as inexperienced as I, it gave me the self-confidence I needed.

Food Buying

Then the big day came. My menus had been made out and approved and with Jean, my assistant cook, I set out to do my buying. It saves a lot of time if the cook can do as much of her shopping in one trip as possible, and for food for nine and one-half people for four days makes quite an extensive list. (To ease your curiosity, Freddy was counted as one-half person, but in the food budget only!)

Home management cooks are careful buyers. Each label is read, some quick arithmetic done with the price and poundage and the result is the best possible buy. That ever-present budget was kept constantly in mind, but with careful planning it was no problem. Our meals were good and there was plenty of food. For proof of that we could visit Gay's scales and see our added pounds recorded. Fortunately, (or perhaps unfortunately) we had a full-length mirror that had the happy faculty of making us appear much slimmer than we really were and so with our consciences eased, we'd go back and ask for second helpings.

Back in the kitchen, I was busy whipping up this and that so that meal time would continue to be the most popular time of the day. "All you have to do is follow the recipe," I kept telling myself. And it really was that simple. Before long I was making up my own recipes depending on what I could find in the refrig-erator and adding a dash of this or that for added flavor. "If Mom could only see me now," I thought.

If anyone had told me before I went into home management that I would be cooking dinner for eleven people including Dr. and Mrs. Friley, I'm sure I would have considered switching to a science major, but fortunately no one warned me. For that's what I did, and with the help of the rest of the house, that dinner turned out to be one of our most enjoyable parties.

There was one mishap however. Someone, probably the cook, pulled out the refrigerator plug instead of the mixer plug and instead of ginger ale sherbet, our dessert was a sparkling liquid with a thick layer of foam on the top. Trying to remain poised, I pretended to myself that it was really a hot weather delicacy we had found in an ancient Burmese cookbook and Mrs. Friley was probably dying for the recipe. When she really did comment on how good it was, we all tried to hide knowing smiles, and the party went smoothly on its way.

Then a few more days of cooking, a quick food inventory and a thorough cleaning of the kitchen and how long dreaded job of cook was over. I'd actually enjoyed it, and had I ever learned a lot!

My last job was hostess-manager. This was rather an all-inclusive job in which I served at meals, set the table, kept the books, arranged centerpieces, presided at house meetings and was the official guest welcomer. It was really an ideal job to conclude my home management career.

Home Management Life

Now you have some idea of the work in a home management house, but that doesn't begin to describe the life you'll find there. Home management is a unique experience in which you not only live with, but work with seven other girls in a family situation. Maybe a few of these girls are already good friends of yours, others you may have seen on campus and some may be complete strangers. It doesn't make any difference. Before the first week is over you'll feel that you've known them all your life. When you work together in a home situation you soon learn how well a girl cooperates with others and what she has to contribute to group living.

We were a mighty congenial bunch. When Mary Ellen brought home a huge jar of pop corn we formed the Vultures Club which met every night at ten. Sure, we'd had enough to eat during the day, but the smell of fudge and pop corn beckoned the most determined scholar to the kitchen. Then the next day we'd include a fast game of croquet or badminton which Dodo had brought from home, in an effort to counteract those calories.

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set the mood

by Darleen Bornschein
Technical Journalism Sophomore

or green seems much easier to lift than pieces upholstered in black or brown.
In the living room, where you especially want furnishings and guests to stand out, walls of soft, dark hues make a pleasing background that doesn’t pull the eyes away from the more important.
Color can make a world of difference in a room or in a person. Use it wisely and it will repay you with exactly the effect you want.

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We’re still laughing over the time Barb invited her bacteriology professor and his wife to dinner while she was cook. The food tasted good to us, but the professor didn’t return to class for two weeks. I hasten to add that he was doing research and was really quite healthy, but it makes a good story.

Dish Washing Time

Do you know when we had some of our best times? While doing the dishes! With four of us on the job it didn’t take long, but it gave us an opportunity to perfect our four-part vocal harmony. It’s a good thing Freddy was immune to noise. Otherwise the poor boy wouldn’t have slept much.

And then there was Freddy himself, the king of the household. With nine attentive women to look after him he didn’t know the meaning of the Iowa State ratio. “Do you really think he’s cuter than when we got him, or is it just because we know him so much better?” We never could figure that one out, but there was no doubt that Freddy’s harem thought he was wonderful.

Then suddenly it was graduation time. The books had been sent to the auditor for the last time, the house was all cleaned for the next group and our bags were packed ready to go home. Home management was over. In six weeks I had been able to apply the home economics that I had been studying for three years. And was I surprised at how much I had learned! Instead of a dreaded ordeal it had turned out to be the most enjoyable and rewarding experience I had had at Iowa State.