

Lancaster Countians Show True Christmas Spirit

By Sally Bair
Feature Writer

The true Christmas spirit is alive and well in Lancaster County, and because of it some 900 children will have a brighter, happier Christmas holiday.

The beneficiaries of the generosity of the Lancaster community are the children of families involved in the Expanded Nutrition Education Program conducted by the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service.

On Thursday evening these children, ages 3-15, gathered at the Edward Hand elementary school to watch movies, sing traditional carols and enjoy a hearty Santa who helped distribute gifts.

They were obviously thrilled and delighted as they got a head start on celebrating Christmas which would have been very meager for them had it not been for the giving spirit of others.

A party was given Wednesday in the Columbia area, and although the one scheduled for the Quarryville area was cancelled due to the snow the toys are being distributed.

According to Tillie Gibson, extension nutrition aide supervisor, the idea of hosting these children at a Christmas party was conceived last year at Christmas by the aides who work directly with low-income families in the county. They realized that many children in their program families had not been reached by existing programs such as Toys for Tots. Since there is no money in the ENEP budget to allow for Christmas parties, the aides were told that the only way it would be possible would be to get donations. And get donations they did!

The actual work for the party began in October with aides Ponnie Patterson and Gladys Brubaker spearheading the effort. They contacted local businesses, banks and candy manufacturers and came up with enough gifts and stocking stuffers to make this Christmas a very happy one for the children.

Even fabric stores were able to get in on the act - they contributed the fabric necessary to make all those stockings! A group of Mennonite women contributed the time necessary to sew 115 of the stockings, and the aides sewed the remainder and stuffed them all with loving care.

Farm Women Societies contributed a lion's share by donating mittens and money to purchase mittens for the children.

Mayor Thomas Monaghan contributed \$100 to the fund, but even better than that, he showed his deep concern and interest by attending the party Thursday.

Getting the donations of money, merchandise, candy and oranges took quite a lot of shoe leather and time, but that was only the beginning. Since the party was "by invitation only"

for children of over 500 program families, the aides knew just who would be there and what their wants and needs might be. Just imagine the logistics of deciding who gets which doll or truck for 900 children! To make sure there would be no disappointed children the aides made lists and checked them twice - and sometimes three times.

Stuffing stockings for that many children is no small matter either. Toys, coloring books, candy and oranges were all carefully divided among those attending. The aides spent a day filling those stockings.

And what kind of Christmas party would it have been without Christmas cookies? The aides baked and baked, and one aide baked 500 cookies herself! They ended up with a "table full" of cookies. Most of the work for the party was done on their own time, Mrs. Gibson points out.

The delighted children were not the only ones who benefited from the party. Mrs. Gibson said, "Lancaster County really went all out. It was a total county effort, and the total county will benefit. These kids would have gotten very little for Christmas. Many are really in need."

Nutrition Assistant Lynda Lueck said, "This is a first and we hope it will set the scene for an annual affair of this kind. The program we offer for the kids is mostly in the summer so this brings them together for an event in the winter." She added, "It gives us a chance to reach kids in

the outlying regions of the county, since city kids are usually covered through other programs at Christmas."

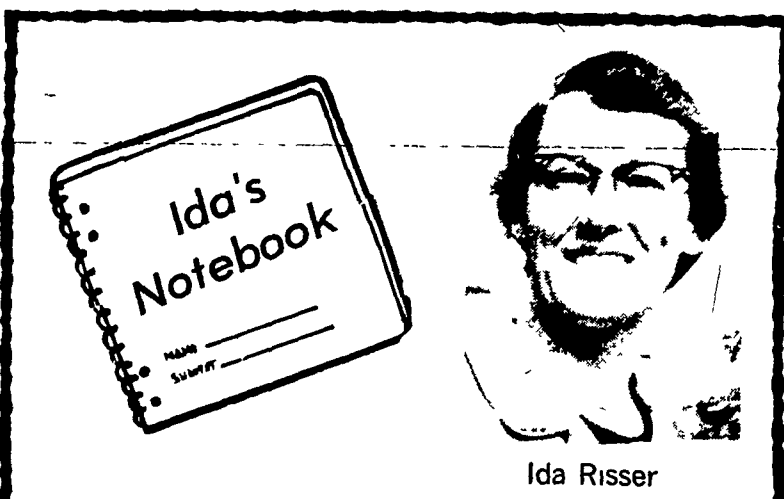
"The cooperation has been really magnificent," she said, citing the contributions of the business community and Farm Women Societies which made the party possible.

The 14 aides who developed and carried out the party plans are Miriam Beiler, Judith Hessen, Dorothy S. Kreider, Glenn Feito, Susan Jane Work, Sarah Ann Laing, Bonnie Rudisill, Romaine Morrow, Myrna Cosme, Iris Navarro, Gladys Brubaker, Maria Piece, Bernice Wright, and Ponnie Patterson. Home Economist Doris Thomas coordinated the efforts along with Mrs. Gibson and Miss Lueck.

The aides were on hand Thursday evening to keep things moving smoothly, but handing out gifts to that many children requires a lot of helpers for Santa. So leaders and members of the Good Use 4-H Club pitched in to see that each child was taken care of, and parents and homemakers assisted where needed.

Seeing the shining faces of children and the satisfied look of fulfilled adults makes you feel that through this effort the extension nutrition aides showed that there is plenty of that good old fashioned Christmas spirit still in the hearts of Lancaster Countians.

Merry Christmas!



Ida Risser

It's getting nearer to that magic day - Christmas. The cards have been mailed, the many kinds of cookies baked, the gifts gaily wrapped and the tree decorated.

Now we need a family gathering to make all of our efforts worthwhile. We expect to have everyone here this season, including Nancy who plans to fly from Seattle, Wash. Maybe we'll have snow for her as that is an unusual occurrence on the coast.

We have an added attraction in our home this wintertide. Since we had a damper installed in our chimney, we look forward to many a cozy evening in front of our old corner fireplace. The brass andirons are in place and we have a small pile of ap-

plewood cut.

Sitting by the fire with its flickering shadows causes one to remember Abraham Lincoln and how he read his books by its dim light. But the day after, when I sweep up the cinders and ashes, then I think of Cinderella, the household drudge. Really though, I do enjoy the smell of wood-smoke and the comfortable glow of a well-laid fire.

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Music can certainly set the mood. It's nice to address Christmas letters while listening to carols on the stereo. Recently, we heard of chorus of over 80 voices present Handel's Messiah in our High School. It was a tremendous performance.

I imagine some people would be shocked to hear O. Henry, the



Nutrition aides Judy Hessen (l) and Romaine Morrow (center) work with Tillie Gibson to fill some of the hundreds of stockings needed for their Christmas party.

Farm Women Societies

Society 3

Members and children of Farm Women Society 3 were entertained at the Christmas party held December 15 at the Fellowship Hall of Swamp UCC. Mrs. Harold E. Stuber was hostess.

Mrs. Clarence Stauffer was in charge of the business meeting, after which Mrs. Harold Fry gave a report on the services available from the Ephrata Public Library. Mrs. Fry also furnished entertainment with a "Story Time". She is a librarian in the Ephrata Area School.

Santa Claus visited and gave each child a gift. There was also a gift exchange among the members, with a social hour and refreshments.

Delegates to the Farm Women Society State Convention at the Harrisburg Forum on January 7 and 8 are Mrs. Jesse Balmer, Mrs. Walter Shaub and Mrs. Harold E. Stuber.

Mrs. Earl Miller, Mrs. Harvey Gehman, and Mrs. Clarence Stauffer will visit the group's adopted patients at the Hamburg State Hospital for Christmas.

Beginning with the first meeting in 1974, all meetings will begin at 1:30 p.m. instead of 2:00.

Members will serve at the snack bar in the Ephrata Community Hospital December 28.

In cooperation with Society 2, a visit will be made to Conestoga View with a treat and entertainment for the guests.

famous author, say "not being afflicted with a taste for music, I let the system of noises drift past my ears." Thank goodness not everyone feels that way.

Society 14

Farm Women Society 14 members and husbands enjoyed their Christmas banquet held December 12 at Harvest Drive Restaurant.

Howard Combs led the singing of Christmas carols. The program for the evening was Mrs. Whilfield, her son Jeffrey and two other members from the Youth for Christ group, singing carols.

Mittens were donated for the Welsh Mt. exchange program, and there was an exchange of Christmas gifts.

On January 3 Society 14 will sew at the Lancaster General Hospital from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Delegates for the Farm Women's State Convention in Harrisburg will be Mrs. James Hall, Mrs. John Groff and Mrs. Everett Newswanger.

The next meeting will be held January 16 at the home of Mrs. Leon Thomas, 217 Willow Street Pike, with sewing from 10 to 2.

Farm Women Calendar

Tuesday, December 25
Merry Christmas

Thursday, December 27
1 p.m. - Farm Women Society 24
bowling party, Blue Ball
Lanes.

Friday, December 28
Farm Women Society 3 to serve
at the Snack Bar, Ephrata
Community Hospital.

Saturday, December 29
1:30 p.m. - Farm Women Society
5 Christmas party.
Farm Women Society 4 meeting
at the home of Mrs. Mary
Greider, covered dish luncheon
and Christmas party.