

Gladys Mae Brubaker is someone who cares

By SUSAN KAUFFMAN
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — It is not very often that one hears someone say, "I just love my job! I really do. I enjoy it so much that I feel fortunate to have it!" But those are the sentiments of Gladys Mae Brubaker, nutrition aide for the Lancaster County Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Her obvious interest in her job and her several years' experience in this career have undoubtedly gone into her recent election as director for the Capital Region of the Pennsylvania Extension Para Professional Association. July 1 was the official beginning for Mrs. Brubaker's new responsibilities of representing the nutrition aides in nine local counties on a state-wide level.

During the two-year term as director, Mrs. Brubaker will carry to the state association the suggestions and grievances of her area, collect and pay dues for the various counties under her charge, help plan the annual state association meeting, and keep the county aides informed of association actions.

Although the record keeping and correspondence will add to her present workload as an aide in Lancaster County, Gladys looks forward to this new challenge to help continue the program — a very worthwhile one in her eyes. At the urging of her director, Mrs. Doris Thomas, Lancaster County extension home economist, Mrs. Brubaker ran for office and was elected in June. Mrs. Brubaker feels she can count on Mrs. Thomas and her nutrition aide supervisor, Tillie Gibson, to assist her with her new duties as they have done in the past with her job as an aide. Mrs. Brubaker values highly the cooperation between administrators and aides she has experienced during the six years she has worked in EFNEP.

EFNEP, a part of the Cooperative Extension Service of The Pennsylvania State University, has as its primary goal nutrition and money management education for families with limited resources. Two years after the national program was instituted, EFNEP was begun in Lancaster County by Penn State in 1971. One year later, Mrs. Brubaker began her work in the southern end of Lancaster County.

Instructors in EFNEP are called nutrition aides. Before they start to work with families on a one to one basis, the aides are trained during a three-week program at the Farm and Home Center. Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Gibson



Mrs. Gladys Mae Brubaker, nutrition aide; Doris Thomas, program director; and Tillie Gibson, nutrition aide supervisor, took over a list of Mrs.



Brubaker's new duties as aide director for the Pennsylvania Para Professional Association.

direct the program and instruct the prospective aides in nutrition, money management, and the operation of the nutrition aide program.

Presently there are 12 nutrition aides working in Lancaster County. Six are funded through Penn State. Four are paid through the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and two are paid through the Office of Aging, Title 9.

Families in need of nutritional advice are referred to the Lancaster County Extension Service by various agencies throughout the city and county. Mothers with small children are a primary concern. These families are then contacted by a nutrition aide to explain the program, and if they are interested in gaining some information on nutrition, they participate in the program on a one to one basis.

Mrs. Brubaker explained that she may make one or two initial contacts within a few weeks' time to determine if the family wishes to take part in the purely educational program. Once the mother of the household decides to avail herself of the program's information and the aide's support, the aide then begins weekly visits to the home and develops a program geared to the immediate needs of that home. Mrs. Brubaker explained that many special problems may need particular attention such as obesity, diabetes, blindness or very limited funds, to name a few.

With the assistance of the director and the aide supervisor, the aides gather as many applicable types of educational materials as are available. Filmstrips, books, pamphlets, menus, recipes, newsletters, charts, and tapes all go into the educational program.

At the first the aide may visit the home once a week. Depending on the rate of progress, the schedule will shift to a visit every two weeks and then once a month. After some progress has taken place the mothers are encouraged to form groups for more support and instruction. Eventually, some of the mothers will take over the instruction themselves in 4-H youth nutrition clubs under the supervision of a nutrition aide.

The information-centered program assists homemakers in gaining the necessary knowledge to help

themselves improve their family's eating habits and health and to guide in better money management. Presently there are 1000 families cooperating in the program in Lancaster County with a prospective total of 600 youth involved in Summer 4-H nutrition clubs. In addition to those families already in the program, the extension office receives 75 to 100 additional names each month.

Mrs. Brubaker told Lancaster Farming that her present case load is 70 families. Her area includes the southern end of the county from Columbia to Christiana and as far south as the Maryland line.

Although she has a large geographic territory to cover and a many families to become involved with on a one to one basis, Mrs. Brubaker thoroughly enjoys her work.

"I am glad I have this job and I really enjoy it so much." "It is a challenge to find ways to help each family," she says. "Each family has a special need and I try to meet it and find a way to help," she said.

"We work with the mother, mostly, because if she eats well then her family will probably eat well, too, since she is the one who prepares the food." In order to get the mother to see where her diet might be missing some of the four basic food groups, I ask her to recall everything she ate in the last 24 hours. I do this at the beginning and every six months to see what progress has been made."

Mrs. Brubaker explained that she works with most families for a two year period before they graduate or join a group program. The mothers especially delight in receiving recipes and finding new ways to prepare foods. Occasionally, the aide will go along with a mother to the grocery store to assist her in shopping wisely for food value for the money spent and for nutritionally sound menus.

When working closely with people in their homes, Mrs. Brubaker pointed out there is obviously a great deal more than the instruction in nutrition facts and money management that goes into the success of the program. She found over the last six years that the immediate problems of the household have to be overcome, and she, as an aide, has to gain the confidence and trust of the families before she can communicate with them meaningfully.

"Many times I have had calls late at night from a mother who had to have someone to talk to about something that was really bothering her. I hope I can help out then, too," she added.

Having lived in southern Lancaster County all her life and having reared four children of her own, Mrs. Brubaker has had experience in family living and the locality in which she works. She credits much of her happiness and success in this job, however, to her faith.

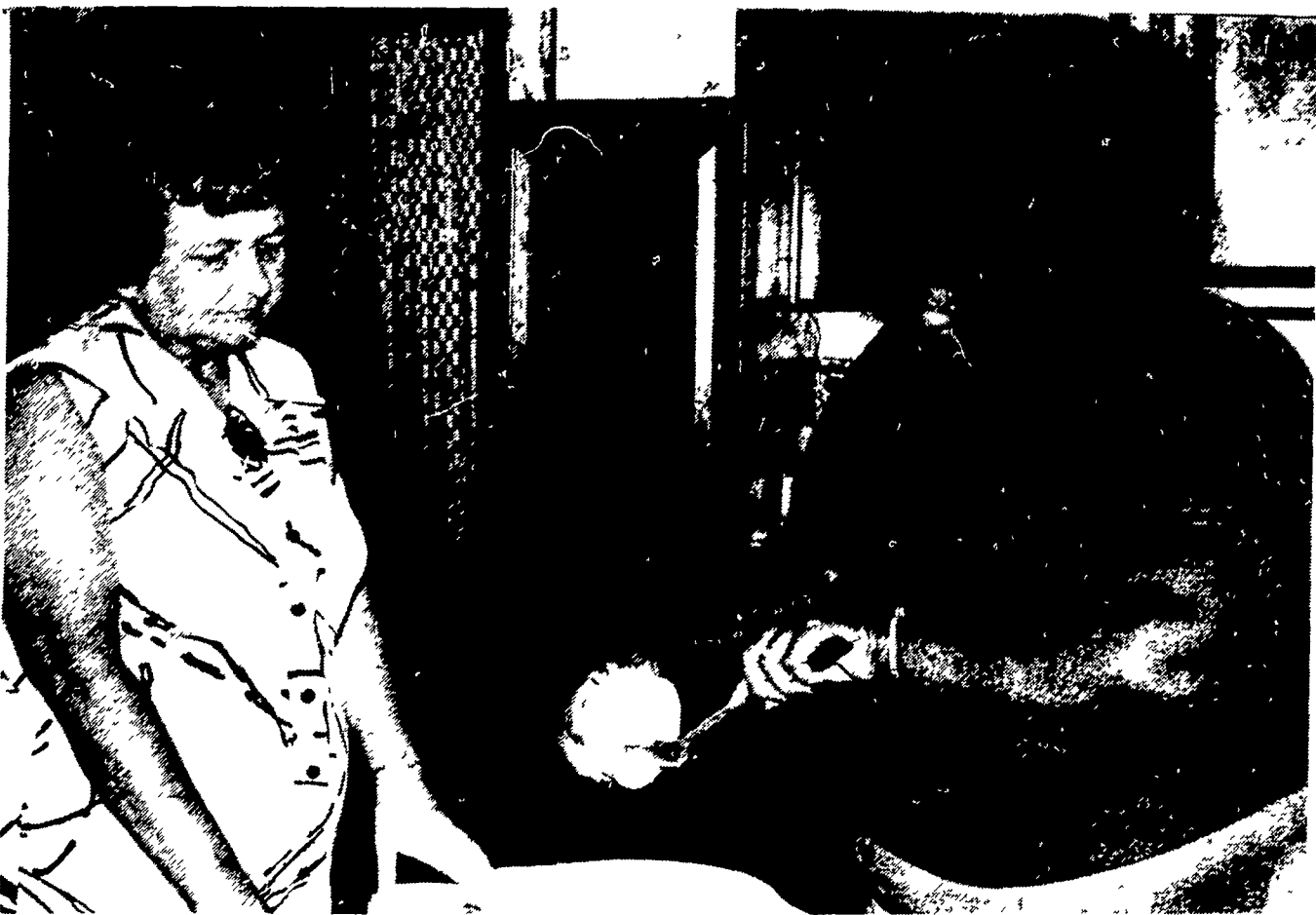
"I think this job was what God had in mind for me to do after my children were grown. My church has been very good for me and this job. The families are so appreciative of the help I can give them and I am thankful that I can help them."

"The theme of EFNEP is 'Someone who cares,'" Mrs. Brubaker pointed out.

"It was hard for me to go back to school to start this job, but as I have often told my children, 'If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing it the best way you can and any job that is worthwhile will require a lot of hard work.' I had to remind myself of that many times as I became discouraged from time to time with the classes I took," Mrs. Brubaker recalled.

In addition to meeting with homemakers in their homes, Mrs. Brubaker also works with a 4-H club in the southern end of the county, teaches nutrition at the Solanco School District in the Senior High Special Education class and a clinic at Lionville once a month.

Mrs. Brubaker has always been a busy person with four children, serving for 20 years as a Sunday School teacher, singing in the choir and leading a Good News Club at the New Providence Church of God. And now she feels fortunate to be very busy with EFNEP. Gladys Mae Brubaker is definitely "someone who cares."



Mrs. Barbara Merrick, Noble Road, Kirkwood, gets a helping hand from Mrs Brubaker in making a raisin cake.