



Nutrition aides shown during an in-service conference at the Farm and Home Center are from left: Stella Selby; Dot Kreider; Brenda Engle; Jan Escott, 4-H Nutrition Assistant with the Lancaster County Extension Service; Gladys Stokes; and Ellie Derry. Bernice Wright was absent.

City 4-H cooking clubs — Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program

EFNEP feeds city youth nutrition information

By SUSAN KAUFFMAN
Staff Correspondent

While to many people the term "4-H" means programs sponsored with the rural youth in mind, each Summer hundreds of young people from the city and surrounding areas work together with local teen leaders and homemaker leaders in the Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in what is called a weekly 4-H cooking club.

Boys and girls from the ages of eight to eighteen gather in various places throughout the city of Lancaster and surrounding municipalities to learn basic cooking procedures, good nutrition and cooperation with others. I spoke with Jan Escott, 4-H Nutrition Assistant at the Lancaster County Extension Service, to find out how the program operates.

Jan has worked with the Lancaster County program for four years. She explained that the 4-H cooking clubs are funded by the Federal Government and administered in the various states through the land grant colleges. Penn State publishes the materials and makes up the programs for the state. The materials and objectives all work toward educating low income families — which Jan prefers to call unreached audiences — especially in the city and suburban environment.

One primary objective of EFNEP as explained by the Lancaster director is promoting nutrition awareness.

"We try to teach the effect that food has on the children," Jan began. "We explain the connection between what children eat and how their bodies work. The four food groups are taught and we work on promoting healthful snacks. We know we can't change eating habits overnight, but if we give them a little bit of knowledge then they can learn to choose more wisely as they grow older," she said.

Earlier this Summer a plea went out to local organizations throughout the county for funds to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to be used in the thirty clubs sponsored by the EFNEP project in Lancaster County. At one time, the program used government supplied products such as peanut butter, cheese and other milk products. Now, however, the emphasis is placed upon acquainting the youngsters with a variety of foods readily available in local stores. It is hoped that the club members will try the foods at home once they have prepared them in the clubs.

The EFNEP 4-H program also hopes to encourage development of leadership within the club members and community homemakers who help as volunteer leaders. Nutrition aides who are salaried leaders receive training from the Extension office and act as organizational leaders throughout the community. They find people interested in serving as leaders and also lead many of the thirty clubs as well.

A real asset to the program as Jan has experienced it is the use of teen leaders. "These teen leaders are often daughters of homemakers who have volunteered to hold meetings or help as leaders. They are very effective as leaders because when the other club members see someone close to their age telling them about the food being prepared, it is much more meaningful to them," Jan explained.

Most groups have less than twenty-five members. When there are more than eight to ten children to a club there is usually more than one leader present. Two groups have nearly thirty members, but most are smaller in number. In all there are over 600 youngsters enrolled this Summer in the program. Eight nutrition aides and thirty volunteer leaders work with the program presently, Jan said.

At each meeting, whether held in a private home, in an agency resource building, such as the Girls Club or the Salvation Army Day Camp, or on a playground, the same



Homestead Notes

A group of 4-H members is shown at the Farnum Street playground club meeting conducted by

Karen Mellinger. The food dish prepared for this particular meeting was tossed salad.

"hands on" teaching techniques are encouraged. "We would like to have each child get involved," Jan explained. "We give them the opportunity to help make the food dish for that meeting and to taste the results. We also try to reinforce the nutritional aspects by using nutritional games," she added.

Usually there is a printed handout for each meeting which includes basic nutrition information, a recipe or two to try and an activity such as a game or puzzle.

Several nutrition education games promoted by the Extension use pictures of foods cut from newspapers and magazines. Other games include actual food items while still other games use posters or cards with printed information on them. Action games such as relays and a version of musical chairs are popular games among active youth.

The recipes used in the clubs are tested to be sure they will be successful, Jan said. The ingredients are kept simple and easy steps in preparation are the rule. Foods which are both tasty and nutritious are used. Examples of such recipes are Orange Julius and peanut butter kisses.

ORANGE JULIUS

½ cup frozen orange juice
½ cup milk
½ cup water
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla
6 to 12 ice cubes (crushed if possible) Put all ingredients into a jar or container with a lid.

Place lid on jar and shake until all ingredients are well mixed.

PEANUT BUTTER KISSES

½ cup corn syrup
½ cup peanut butter
½ cup nonfat dry milk solids
½ cup confectioner's sugar
Mix corn syrup and peanut butter.

Gradually stir in dry milk and sugar. Shape into a ¾ inch roll. Chill and cut. Makes 10 pieces.

Hoping to encourage a feeling of belonging to a larger group including all the 4-H clubs in the EFNEP program, Jan's staff has attempted for the first time this year to hold a round-up type convention. The clubs were all invited to participate in the "4-H Convention" held Thursday at the Grul's Services Auditorium, Rockland Street, Lancaster. Members and clubs exhibited nutrition posters at the round-up. The Lancaster County Dairy Princess presented her milk promotion skit. Games and singing entertained the members. Pensupreme donated ice cream for the refreshments and screen printed T-shirts were given to each child who attended. The T-shirts were donated by local clothing makers and were screen printed with an EFNEP log which includes the words "Eat right, feel great, Lancaster 4-H."

After the Summer 4-H program is concluded, the Winter schedule begins for the EFNEP staff. Many city agencies such as the Salvation Army, the Spanish Center and the Boys and Girls Clubs include on-going sessions from the EFNEP in their year round programs. Jan said she also works with the public school system during the school year presenting a variety of projects with nutrition education as basic goals.

One in-school project which has been very successful is project RAT. For a number of weeks, two different diets are fed to rats to see if there is a resulting effective growth. The rats fed well-balanced diets thrive, while those fed diets consisting of sugars and starches only failed to grow.

By studying about the basic food groups, by making dishes which can be duplicated in the child's home and by playing nutrition games, many young people are learning about food and its connection with their health and how they feel through the EFNEP projects.