

TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Extension Home Economist



No M.A.M.!

"No M.A.M.!" That's what I say to the on-going conflict of "Mothers Against Mothers." On this day before Mother's Day, I issue a special challenge to mothers of all ages, economic status, employment situation and family style. I challenge you to say, "No M.A.M.!"

Several months ago, I received a disturbing phone call. A woman shared with me some tensions she had experienced first while employed and now as a stay-at-home (part-time) mom. She told of how in the past she had made hasty judgments about other women. She remembers thinking that NO women leave their jobs to care for children.

To her surprise, once she chose to work part-time, she discovered other women who had made similar choices. She found that they were dynamic, intelligent women who were wrestling with some of the same questions that her professional colleagues had addressed.

My caller described how that had been a learning experience for her. She made some sad observations, and I began to ask, "What are we fighting for?" What is accomplished by putting another mother down through our

thoughts, actions or subtle assumptions?

Employed moms, have you:

- ever sensed that others think you are slighting your children by placing them in a day care situation for 8-10 hours each day?
- winced when another person reports how your child took her first steps or called their name?
- donated extra cash to a fund raiser because you were unable to bring baked goods?
- felt neglected when you couldn't attend a Mother's Day Our or daytime Mother-Daughter event?

Stay-at-home moms, have you:

- ever felt uncomfortable serving on a community committee where everyone else identified themselves by job title and employer?
- felt bubbling resentment when another mom dressed in expensive clothing and driving a fancy car comments to you that she HAS TO work because her family can't afford not to have her work (especially when you're conversing while standing beside your 10-year-old used four-door car and wearing a T-shirt with slogans that are three or four years out-of-date)?
- been frustrated when you ap-

plied for a part-time position, a volunteer board, or a loan and found that people doubted your ability to fulfill commitments because you didn't have an impressive resume or work record?

Women have a history of being sensitive and nurturing. We are known for our strong communication skills and our ability to build coalitions — networks of cooperation. I challenge you to take steps today to put those skills to work. Feel confident that you have made the very best choice for your family. Then give other moms that same latitude to make different choices given their own unique circumstances.

Take an active part in screening your reactions so that we can reduce the amount of tension and guilt on both sides of the issue. Mothers need support and encouragement, no matter what "hat" they are wearing. Research has indicated that the better women feel in the roles they have chosen — no matter what those roles are — the more content their children will be. Supporting mothers builds a positive environment for children too. This Mother's Day celebrate the women that have supported you, and mothers accept honor for your own dedication. Begin today to put an end to mothers against mothers. Say, "No M.A.M."

Rebecca Escott is a Home Economist with Penn State Cooperative Extension in Lehigh County. Cooperative Extension provides practical information designed to improve the quality of life for local residents. We work in partnership with Penn State and county government.

Home Run Contest

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — For a third consecutive year, Pennsylvania dairy farmers, through the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, have joined forces with the Harrisburg Senators Baseball Club and Giant Foods to bring fans the ice cream "Home Run Contest." This is conducted as part of the Senators regular games and related promotional activities.

"The Senators feel that the addition of not only the home run contest on the radio but also the one in the park really increases the excitement in the game at the ballpark and over the radio," says Mark Mattern, public relations director for the Harrisburg Senators Baseball Club. "The contest increases listenership. We feel that when people sign up for this, it gives a plug for all dairy products and dairy farmers."

The "Home Run Contest" has grown and matured over the past couple of years. On the radio network, fans enter the "Home Run Inning Contest." A single name is drawn for every game with this contestant competing during the fourth inning of that game. If any Senator batter hits a home run during the fourth inning, the contestant wins 25 half gallons of ice cream. Contestants win a consolation prize, a half-gallon of ice cream, if no one hits a home run.

"In the fourth inning of each game, we pick one name and that person gets the entire half inning to win. If ten batters come up in an

inning, you get all ten. We wanted to have more big winners in the contest," says Mattern.

"The good thing about the contest is that we have done it in the past. People are used to it, get excited about it, and look for the entry blank in our program. We've had a lot of people enter already and we have not been in town for too many games," adds Mattern.

Inside of the stadium, fans attending Senators' home games can also win ice cream. For each game, the Pennsylvania Dairy/Giant advertisement is stamped in one program. If a Senator ballplayer hits a home run over the ice cream billboard, in left centerfield, the program holder wins 25 half gallons of ice cream. A consolation prize is awarded in this contest, as well.

The dairy farmers are also part of the Senators' radio network, on WNNK-AM 1400, Harrisburg, and WCTX-FM 92.1, Palmyra. Milk commercials featuring voices from the farm system are shared with listeners. The messages emphasize the benefits of drinking milk. The Senators' network and stadium activities offer dairy farmers a great vehicle to get messages to consumers of all ages.

"Pennsylvania Dairy has been a solid sponsor from day one," says Mattern. "Everything the dairy farmers have done certainly has helped the Senators grow. Hand-in-hand, both of us are really moving forward by leaps and bounds because of the association."

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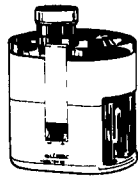


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