

A TIME TO LAUGH

A TIME TO SHARE

A TIME TO GROW

1980 4-H HOMEMAKING CLUB LEADERS' PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Joyce Canning Regional Supervisor Central Ontario

Learning, sharing, laughing, growing—that's what 259 4-H Homemaking Club Leaders were doing at the 2nd Annual Leaders' Conference held at the downtown Holiday Inn, Toronto, November 18-20th.

Carol Crerar, Regional Supervisor for North & South Eastern Ontario got the Conference off to a rousing start on Tuesday evening with a get acquainted session that soon had everyone mingling and chattering with great enthusiasm. After a half hour of fun, things settled down to a more serious nature as leaders divided into groups of ten to discuss some issues of the current 4-H program which are of concern to all. Many valuable suggestions were obtained from this exchange of ideas.

Wednesday morning began with a delicious buffet breakfast. The first speaker of the day, Mrs. Phyllis Meiklejohn immediately captured the ladies attention with an address appropriately entitled "Now That We've Caught Your Attention." She discussed many ways to make meetings more interesting and meaningful and above all to make learning a FUN experience. She suggested that the following factors are important in providing a good teaching/learning environment.

- one which is **REALISTIC** to the learner
- one which **INVOLVES** the learner in all ways mentally, physically and emotionally
- one which makes the learner an **ACTIVE PARTICIPANT** (learn to do by doing!)
- one in which the learner can taste **SUCCESS**
- one in which the learner can find **PLEASURE** in being a part.

Why are you a volunteer? This was one of the questions dealt with by the next speaker, Jane Moon, in a talk entitled "Volunteers—Important People." Miss Moon suggested that when you are faced with the problem of finding new volunteers (leaders) you might start by asking yourself this series of questions. How was I approached? Why did I agree? What factors would I consider to recruit new leaders? Where would I look?

She suggested that the old adage—when you want a job done, ask a busy person—does not hold true in every situation. She suggested the following people for consideration—multicultural groups and associations, athletes, newcomers to the community, shut-ins, handicapped, women in late teens and early twenties, professional and business people.

The underlying message inherent in each of these addresses was the importance of **ENTHUSIASM**. "Enthusiasm is the all-essential jet propeller. It is the driving force which elevates men to miracle workers. It begets boldness, courage; kindles confidence; overcomes doubts. It creates endless energy, the source of all accomplishments."

A special luncheon provided at noon was chaired by the Director of the Home Economics Branch, Miss Molly McGhee. Mr. Kenneth E. Lantz, Deputy Minister of Agriculture was the speaker. He congratulated the ladies for the fine work they do and expressed the appreciation of the Ministry for their dedication and support of all our programs.

Dr. Marion Powell captivated the audience with her timely, pertinent, informative, and sometimes shocking address on "Meeting Adolescent Needs." She gave some rather startling statistics in regard to both pregnancy and sexual activity among teenagers. "As parents and leaders," she said, "it is important for us to realize that adolescence is a legitimate phase of the life cycle—not just a nebulous time between childhood and adulthood. Most teenagers, girls especially, become physically mature long before they are socially mature. This creates a lot of problems and many of them can't handle it."

The remainder of Wednesday afternoon and evening was free time to go to the Royal Winter Fair or do some Christmas shopping.

The last day of the conference, the group was addressed by Dr. Denis Shackel, a psychologist with the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto. Denis' talk—Leadership is Communication—dealt with the areas of Feedback, Assertiveness, Questioning and Responding, and developing Self Confidence. Dr. Shackel suggested that the best approach to communication is the SOLER method. If that is a new word to you as it was to most everyone there, this is what SOLER means.

- S — squarely (stand or sit facing audience)
- O — openly (be honest)
- L — lean (toward your audience/partner)
- E — eye contact (maintain at all times)
- R — reserve judgement (be open minded)

If you don't presently follow these guidelines when you are communicating, try them, you may be pleasantly surprised at the different response you get.

What did the leaders themselves think of the conference? Here are just a few of the comments we received.

Re: Phyllis Meiklejohn—I came away from her session full of enthusiasm. She gave me so many new and interesting ways of teaching 4-H, I can hardly wait to get started. Since I am not a teacher by profession, any help I can receive in this matter is of great benefit to me.

Lorna Greenless, Jordan Station

Re: Dr. Marion Powell—4-H leaders have a great deal of contact with adolescents and Dr. Powell gave us some insight into their needs, using some startling facts and blunt statements. Sex is what we ARE not what we DO. Sex education is being comfortable with who you are, yourself and your relationships. She left us with a very important idea which should be the overriding attitude in sex education: the most important sex organ we have is between our ears!

Jean Emmett, Brantford