

WI today: Women Involved!

'Sponsorship would raise WI image'

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By now you most certainly have a good understanding of the project's structure and objectives.

With that knowledge under your hats, we'll pause to explain the funding.

The Foundation for Rural Living has accepted the responsibility of fund-raising for AALP. Donations are handled through the foundation, an organization whose purpose is to educate the public about the importance of rural Canada and the agricultural industry to the economic and social well-being of the country. It undertakes projects and research to strengthen the agricultural industry and the rural community.

Initial sponsors have pledged support for this program to cover approximately 25 per cent of the total cost of the first group of participants. Each of the participants must also pay \$2,000 — which will contribute to about 25 per cent of the operating cost. The total cost for the first group of participants over the two-year period is roughly \$400,000 (including salaries and other overhead).

To fund half of the costs, those in Ontario who are committed to the development of agricultural leadership are being called upon to provide private support. This means roughly \$200,000 must be raised from rural organizations, corporations and individual donors.

And *this* is where the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario come into the picture.

According to Jack Hagarty, executive director of Agricultural Leadership Trust, the FWIO was the *first* group to be approached for financial support.

"I had occasion to speak before a number of WI branches across the province when I returned from a three-year stay in Ghana in the late 1970s," explains Mr. Hagarty. "As I visited the various Women's Institutes, I became very impressed with the sincerity of the members — and I was impressed to discover they planned a year ahead. I saw the WI members as visionaries, and that's what the par-

ticipants in AALP will become, too. They'll also be visionaries — able to see beyond what is happening in their own communities and able to help others find solutions to common concerns."

"It was the WI that provided that lead to me, and I believe the WI could give a signal to a lot of other organizations that the WI thinks the AALP is important, and that the AALP is worth supporting," Mr. Hagarty says.

"A lot of people perceive the WI today as being behind the times, but their support of a project like this shows the WI is, in fact, very much in tune with — and even a little ahead of — the times."

Mr. Hagarty notes that nine of the current 30 participants are women, and, he says AALP could well be training "future WI leaders, as well."

"If any group knows about nurturing, it should be the WI — it would be very significant to me if I could say the WI has given \$10,000 to sponsor a seminar because I think other organizations would look to their lead and say, 'We'd better do something similar.'"

Mr. Hagarty stresses AALP is designed to run forever, and, he says being one of the original supporters will be "like starting a new college or university. It is just like being a charter member or a founding father or mother."

He adds there would also be significant media coverage in recognition of the WI contribution and that a WI representative would be invited to outline the WIs goals or objectives during the seminar they sponsor or at a banquet in the group's honor.

FWIO president Charlotte Johnson told **Home & Country** she can't think of a better way to raise the image of the Women's Institutes than to sponsor an AALP seminar.

"One of our objectives is to develop leadership in the community. What better way to do that than sponsor a seminar to help these rural leaders get first class, professional training to develop their leadership abilities."

WI can be pro AALP partici

Diane Duncan believes the Women's Institutes should jump at the chance to sponsor an Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program seminar.

To lend financial support to the program, explains the Almonte woman, would be very much in keeping with the WI's long-standing commitment to the improvement of rural life and the education of rural people.

"The WI can play a major role in setting up a whole educational process to help farmers keep pace with what is going on in the urban business world. The WI can be part of changing the trend from farming as a way of life to farming as a business. There is a way to blend the two — the way of life and the business — without one outweighing the other."

She also sees the AALP enabling future generations of farm children to compete more closely with their urban classmates. "The WI can help us examine structures within the farming community, such as values, and help us find ways to get farm children started from a relatively equal position with regard to life experiences. How can we assist them with travel opportunities and so forth? These are the kinds of things WI support could help us determine."

Just who is this Diane Duncan, anyway, and what makes her so sure the WI is interested in the issues she's described above?

Well, for one thing, Mrs. Duncan is one of the 30 individuals selected to participate in AALP, a two-year program designed to prepare rural leaders for tomorrow's challenges. (See main story for a complete description of the program.)

That certainly makes her knowledgeable about AALP — but there's more.

Mrs. Duncan is also a WI member, and as such, she's well aware of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario's objectives, resources and potential for achievement.

"My grandmother was a charter member of the Balderson WI and my