

# Mother's Morning Out

By Mary Whitwell

In July of 1987 a group of interested women from the Binbrook United Church, the Binbrook WI and the Woodburn WI met to discuss a program for young women who stayed home with their children and who needed a break.

Rev. Russell, the United Church Minister, chaired the meeting. After much discussion and planning the new program - called "Morning Out" - was started. An executive was chosen and courses were selected. Sponsors and Institutes were approached for funding. And the UCW fliers were mailed throughout Glanbrook Township promoting the new program.



A group of young mothers admiring the results of their bread-making course.

The response was great; 35 Moms and 38 children signed up for the first program. The maximum number of children allowed into the program is forty. The person in charge of the child care is a Childhood Education Teacher. She is assisted by a retired teacher and volunteers from the

sponsoring groups, as well as interested community volunteers. The children are divided into groups - infants, two and three year olds, and four and five year olds.

Some of the courses offered included: parenting, aerobics, volleyball, line dancing, crafts, flower arranging, quilting, self-defence, street proofing, t-shirt painting, cooking, cake decorating and bread-making. Each course costs \$35 and childcare is \$5 each for two children.

The women enjoy the program because it allows them to get out, meet others in the community, and share ideas and concerns. And at the same time their children are learning social skills.

Today, the program continues with the help of a regional grant. The interest remains high and the young mothers' approval and delight with the courses and child care offered makes this venture all worth while.

Mary Whitwell is the Chair of the Executive for the "Morning Out" Program and is the Secretary of the Binbrook WI.

## Organization Profile:

# The OMAF Information Centre

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) Information Centre is located on the ground floor of their 801 Bay Street office in Toronto. They're open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Their phone number is (416)326-3400.

### Resources

- booklets and information of all kinds on the subject of food, including nutrition, preservation, safe preparation and storage
- a host of OMAF technical fact sheets, from diseases of plants and livestock, to pruning fruit trees and farm management books
- foodland Ontario recipes, Pick-Your-Own Guides and seasonal availability guides
- information on ministry programs and activities
- soil maps and reports

### What They Do

- answer consumer questions about food and general agriculture
- help people find their way around the ministry
- provide a referral service for public inquiries
- act as the central switchboard for OMAF
- distribute ministry publications, reports, surveys, strategic plans, recipes, fact sheets, brochures, and more
- produce information sheets on topics of current consumer interest
- produce a publication for consumers - Ontario Food Fare - distributed through community newspapers

### What They Don't Do

- dispense advice on diet or health care (they do provide general information, references and publications on nutrition)
- conduct recipe searches (they do provide advice on following methods for recipes and recipes on products that are locally grown and processed)
- answer specific questions about your farm operation (these are best handled by your local field office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food)
- answer questions about general home economics, such as sewing and cleaning (they recommend you try your local library)

For more information contact the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Information Centre, 801 Bay St., 1st Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2B2, Tel: (416)326-3400.

