

idea corner

Reaching Young Homemakers

The SHARE Idea

How can young homemakers be reached with Extension educational programs? Sharing Homemaking and Related Experiences (SHARE) is a program designed for the young homemaker. The idea originated with the Extension home economist of Perry County and became a project of the Extension Homemakers Club.

The Homemakers Club members are aware of the educational materials and services available through Extension. Most have been members for many years. The younger homemaker, however, hasn't taken advantage of Extension's services. Therefore, the idea of SHARE was to offer an innovative method of teaching and learning.

Objectives

In the SHARE program, an Extension Homemakers member and a younger homemaker work together on a one-to-one basis as Sharemates. The goals of the SHARE program are to: (1) open the lines of communication between young homemakers and Extension Homemakers by having them work together on concerns of mutual interest, (2) involve at least 50 young homemakers in Perry County in learning experiences with Extension Homemakers Club members to improve their skills in homemaking and family

living, and (3) acquaint young homemakers with Extension's program through involvement with the more experienced Extension Homemakers members.

Implementing the Program

Members of the 10 Extension Homemakers Clubs in Perry County developed their own guidelines for participation in the SHARE program. The Extension Homemakers assessed their own special skills, talents, and interests—providing a basis for identifying activities and educational projects they could share with younger homemakers. The activities included food preservation, quilting, gardening, sewing, homemaking, family picnics, child care, and communication with one another.

Sharemates

Younger homemakers expressing a desire to participate in the SHARE program were paired with a member of Extension Homemakers to work on educational projects of common interest. The two Sharemates established their own schedule of work—some worked together once or twice a week, others every two or three weeks, some only once a month. Each Extension Homemakers Club member kept a record of the time spent participating in the SHARE program.

A Valuable Tool

In the 2 years of its existence, more than 4,000 hours have been logged as shared time. The length of the shared projects ranged from four months to two years.

As a result of their experience, young homemakers have become informed about Extension programs and have used educational material, house plans, and other services. Some have become members of the Extension Homemakers Club and receive a newsletter that now goes to over 200 young families.

The SHARE program establishes lines of communication between Extension Homemakers and young homemakers. Both the older, more experienced homemaker and the younger homemaker said they grew by working together as Sharemates.

The older Extension Homemakers have become more involved in their Extension Homemakers Club, and they've become more aware of the needs of the younger homemakers. Also, they've developed leadership skills and gained confidence in their own capa-

bilities to work with and involve younger homemakers.

Implications

The idea of SHARE has many implications for future programs. The Perry County Extension Homemakers want to continue and expand the program. They would like to include the older citizens in the county. The SHARE program has been adopted as an Extension Family Life Program for the State of Arkansas. Extension Homemakers Club members are a great resource capable of reaching out to promote their personal growth and strengthen the total Cooperative Extension Service program.

Barbara Spickes

*County Agent—Home Economics
Perryville, Arkansas*

Mary E. Cotton

*Associate Professor—Home Economics
University of Arkansas—Fayetteville*

Margaret Alexander

*District Program Leader—
Home Economics
Little Rock, Arkansas*