

LIVING RESOURCEFULLY -- PART OF
THE CONSUMER AND LIFESTYLE DECISION-MAKING INITIATIVE

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The Living Resourcefully program began as a long-term Extension educational effort to help individuals and families effectively manage resources to maximize their satisfaction and meet needs and goals. Consumer purchase decisions and resource allocation choices, as well as recognition of individual and family values and attitudes, were emphasized in the curriculum. The program was carried out this past year under the Consumer and Lifestyle Decision Making Initiative of our state's Extension Service.

The poster presentation highlighted the development and accomplishments of this program approach, which integrates several subject matter fields, fosters team work, increases productivity, illustrates an effective method of marketing a program, and documents successful accomplishments. The methodology and results will be helpful to teachers at all grade levels, to consumer advocates, and to Extension professionals.

Since family choices involve many substitutes among resources and their uses, the integrated program approach facilitates recognition of the tradeoffs involved. From the accountability perspective, more benefit is illustrated by presenting program results in a unified way, rather than as summaries of many fragmented lessons which alone may seem unimpressive and not worthy of support by tax dollars.

RATIONALE

The greater complexity of the marketplace for goods and services increases the difficulty of making rational decisions. Both dual earner and single parent families are increasing in number. Time and energy are particularly scarce resources for these people. Farm families, low income families, and other clientele groups have special problems in managing their resources. Children and teenagers are becoming important consumers.

TOPICS AND AUDIENCES

Specialists prepared lesson plans, publications, and related materials on goals and decisions, time management, financial management, consumer buying, and related choices. The tradeoffs between the use of money, time, energy, and other resources were featured.

The curriculum included lessons (or series of lessons) for varied clientele groups, including working families,

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young families or singles, rural families, volunteers, low income persons, youth, and the general public. Between October, 1988 and June, 1989, leaders were trained and educational meetings and workshops were held on many issues, reaching over 24,000 individuals. Vast audiences were also reached via newsletters, news articles, radio, and television contacts.

A brochure was developed to publicize the availability of Living Resourcefully materials to potential participants and decision makers. New topics are being added, although the program continues to emphasize decision-making and tradeoffs.

MARKETING THE PROGRAM: PUBLICITY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PROGRAM RESULTS

| 10/1988 - 6/1989 | Number of Educational Meetings and Workshops | Number of Leaders Trained | Audience Reached |
|--|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| CONSUMER CHOICE AND BUYMANSHIP | 98 | 591 | 4,908 |
| CONSUMER FRAUD AND PROTECTION | 17 | - | 1,066 |
| FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING | 230 | 219 | 6,692 |
| HOUSEHOLD RECORDKEEPING | 77 | 13 | 2,051 |
| TIME MANAGEMENT AND HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION | 283 | 619 | 9,628 |
| TOTAL | 705 | 1,442 | 24,345 |

In addition to teaching decision-making to fit individual situations, a key purpose was facilitating the "marketing" of this educational program. Evaluating program impacts and documenting accomplishments is facilitated, which in turn makes marketing easier. Examples of two program's results include:

Participants (80% of 1,032) in the Make Up Your Mind Goals and Decisions program indicated an increased awareness of the importance of setting goals and making careful decisions. Two-thirds planned to use some of their newly acquired decision-making skills, while just over half planned to practice one or more new goal setting techniques.

Follow-up evaluations from 121 participants in Taking Inventory—Protecting Your Household Possessions, (a program on household inventories) indicated that 12% of those who planned to develop a household inventory (34% of participants) actually completed it, while an additional 22% were still working on it. Of those planning to update an existing inventory (45% of participants), 33% had actually updated it and 22% were still working on the update.