

Building our Voice Café – Conversation Notes November 30, 2009

What are the key/essential services home economists provide to Manitobans? How do you define those essential services?

Leadership

PHEc's are connectors, advocates, mentors, collaborators

Resource centre/hub/clearinghouse

- filter questions to best answer, "connectors"
- science to general population "bridging the gap"

Myth busters

Reliable information resource for media

Industry leaders in textiles

Rural leadership specialists e.g. 4H Program

Coordination of large and small projects with community partners

Collaboration, building partnerships e.g. Women's Institute of Manitoba

Mentoring recent grads e.g. IPHE program

Professional designations – Dietitians, PHEc's

Public Education (science-based)

PHEc's are training facilitators, teachers, consultants, researchers

Family – rural, urban, international

Essential skills – clothing, nutrition, cooking, financial, family, food labeling

e.g. MAHE program - Basic skills for living

Newcomers – housing, finance, cooking with Canadian foods and appliances, employment

Social - Economic changes, consumer trends, health, housing, food safety and sanitation

Community – Food sustainability, Home economics programs in schools – breakfast programs, healthy choices in cafeterias

Business

PHEc's are owners, consultants, finance specialists, marketing specialists, designers/creators

Private food companies

Food labeling, food safety, HACCP

Caterers

Apparel design

Textile innovations e.g. medical field

Agriculture and rural initiatives

Food production

Entrepreneurs

International development

What seed can we plant together today that could make the most difference for the future of MAHE?

Strategic Planning

Questions from table conversations:

How do we become more accessible/increase our profile?

What do we want to focus on?

How do we become socially accepted? Are we currently being recognized only for our unpaid work?

How do we sell ourselves? How do we sell ourselves through our paid work?

Should we tie ourselves to a political issue such as food security, poverty, housing, etc.?

Do we have a niche or is there a community gap that we can focus on?

Marketing Idea

Seasonal Public Education Campaign: Home Economists for all Seasons

Spring (March – May) – Health Education

Summer (June –August) – Food Preservation or Textiles or maybe a rural focus

Fall (Sept – Nov) – Family, finances, parenting

Winter (Dec – Feb) – Business

Home economists are general contractors/intervention specialists that provide:

A one-stop shop/single window service for families – take “comprehensive” approach from faculty to real life (keep a positive approach) e.g. poverty, financial, credit counseling, family counseling, etc.

- create an environment of total safety

Ideas around networking, collaboration and partnerships

Technology

Phone line

Web – MAHE members profile on website, area of expertise, skills

- add tool to filter questions

Faculty - Increase connections to students, professors

Media - Breakfast Television

Events - Manitoba Homecoming, Centennial Celebration

Community partnerships/collaborations - Winnipeg Harvest, Immigrant Centre of Manitoba (formerly known as the International Centre), Welcome Place

Here's one example of how all of this could be rolled into an action plan involving PHECs across the province:

Step 1

Form teams of four to six MAHE members to develop a 1 hour public education session/demonstration on one of the topics mentioned above. (eg. Developing a healthy meal plan for a week on a budget).

Step 2

Connect with a community organization that would be interested in hosting such an educational session and has an easily accessible audience (eg. Winnipeg Harvest, Immigrant Centre of Manitoba)

Step 3

Develop article and/or promotional material for the session. (eg. Put article on our website, submit to local newspapers, get on Breakfast Television, submit article to Saskatchewan's www.homefamily.net)

Step 4

Deliver session.

Step 5

Evaluate, tweak and repeat wherever and whenever.

The beauty of this idea is that it fosters networking between home economists with similar interests. It gets us known. It can be on whatever topic a group of home economists chooses to work on (undoubtedly the topics will be connected by the theme of helping families). It uses our talents to help others. It builds connections with other organizations. It builds on resources already in existence (Basic Skills for Living website & resources, ASHE's www.homefamily.net, etc).

Let us know if you'd be interested in working with a team of MAHE members to put together this type of educational session on a topic near and dear to your heart.