

## BPW In Retrospect

The range of activities and services engaged in by the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Iowa is truly impressive. They have interpreted the Club objective: "To extend opportunities to business and professional women . . . along lines of industrial, scientific and vocational activities" in a community spirit. They have realized their opportunities through service.

Their civic activities have included everything from purchasing street signs to taking over and running municipal governments. They have exercised their ingenuity in a variety of fund-raising projects, almost as diverse as the individual clubs themselves. They have sponsored the securing and refurbishing of community centers, have helped with innumerable collections for Red Cross, Heart Funds, Cancer Funds, Easter Seal Funds, and other worthy causes. Cities and towns have benefited from their park and other beautification projects. Civic organizations sponsoring all-out community efforts such as centennial celebrations can take BPW cooperation almost for granted. Good relations between the business community and other segments of the population have been promoted by luncheons, coffees, and other meetings.



Deserving of special mention is the effort of the Clubs to preserve the historical heritage of their own communities. In addition to aiding local Historical Societies, several Clubs have engaged in special projects. The Grundy Center Club helped with the restoration of the Herbert Quick Schoolhouse; the Council Bluffs group assisted in the rehabilitation of the historic General Dodge Home; and the Corning Club erected a historical marker on Highway 34 commemorating the Icarian Colony. Local cultural and traditional observances such as Decorah's Nordic Fest and Dubuque's "river activities" have had the enthusiastic participation of the BPW. The Corydon Club's Walden Park Restoration project combined historic and environmental preservation—an effort which garnered national recognition for this group.

Many young people in Iowa have had reason for special gratitude to the BPW for scholarships, loans, and other educational aids. The unique "Partnership With Youth" science exhibit sponsored by the Burlington Club, the Tri-State Art show in Rock Rapids, and the career seminars for high school girls held annually in Manchester are all BPW projects encouraging youth toward worthy educational and vocational goals.

The history of the activities of Iowa BPW Clubs over the years illustrates their ability to "swing with the times." During the Great Depression of the thirties the Boone Club operated a



weekly Women's Exchange enabling women of the community to convert low-priced raw food products to cash, also providing seeds to families unable to buy them. Maquoketa maintained a Community Kitchen. Other Clubs provided clothing and shoes for children of needy families, as well as cash gifts to keep promising high school students in school. During World War II the BPW was active in War Bond drives, aided the USO and Red Cross in their work, and went all out in scrap drives. These and similar activities were almost standard procedure in the Iowa Clubs. Immediately after the War there was a veritable outpouring of money, clothing, food, and medicines for overseas relief.

The humanitarian emphasis of the Clubs was not limited to times of depression or war. Many community hospitals have received substantial help from the BPW. Flood relief, work with the Red Cross Bloodmobile, aid to mental health projects, assistance to the Head Start Program, contributions to enhance the opportunities of retarded children, service to residents of nursing and retirement homes—these and many other altruistic endeavors are typical of the Iowa Club woman's effort to help her fellow human beings.

How can these admirable achievements be best characterized? Each Club, without expectation of special recognition or fanfare, has enriched its own community to such an extent that that place



would be immeasurably the poorer, had the BPW never been organized there.

The emblem of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs contains symbols for Light, Health, Peace, Achievement, Victory, Blessing of Work, and Benediction of Love. It can be said that all these attributes are not mere words—they have lived and functioned in the record of the Iowa Clubs.

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