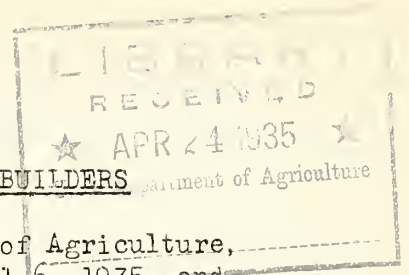


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
48893 Raa



RURAL-YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS ARE CITIZENSHIP BUILDERS Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by A. B. Graham, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered in the National 4-H Club Radio Program, April 6, 1935, and broadcast by a network of 59 associate NBC radio stations.

--ooOoo--

Man is a group-loving animal - the desire to be with others is an instinctive human characteristic, and it is this characteristic that impels us to establish our schools, churches, homes and even our government. We are not like the lion, tiger, and other animals of the cat family, that never travel in flocks or herds. We work and live in groups, each individual member of which is called a citizen. In living and working with that group certain traits of character are unconsciously developed which make us better citizens.

So it is in our youth organizations, the 4-H Clubs, the Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Young Farmers' Clubs, and some others. Is it the extra fine corn or prize pig raised by the boy, and the canning or sewing by the girl that represent the characteristics of good citizenship? No, not always; they are the products of the head and the hand, but not necessarily the products of the heart.

What are some desirable characteristics of good citizenship?

- Cooperation - learning to work with others
- Ambition - the desire to work
- Loyalty - willingness to participate in and subscribe to the decision of the group
- Promptness - in doing work or being on time
- Interest - in educational organizations and general welfare of the community
- Thrift - personal economy

The real purpose of rural youth organizations is to set up conditions under which these traits of character may be developed, so that each member may learn to perform his duty with benefit not only to himself but also to his fellow members. Their primary purpose is not for the acquiring of skill or "how to do a thing" but to develop personal characteristics acceptable and pleasing to the group, to restrain objectionable traits, and to build up a proper attitude toward others.

Let me cite a few cases in which member of such youth organizations have been placed in situation where these qualities of character have been called into activity.

A girl learned to sew in a 4-H Club. She remodeled partly worn garments and, through good judgment, placed them wisely where they were needed. Later, in her early married life, she and her husband got into debt through circumstances over which they had no control. She has now passed an examination for welfare work. Her club training in thrift helped her to evaluate her actual needs, and she has used her salary in welfare work to pay off her debts. A member of the Future Homemakers has redecorated the house, and takes care of the milk and butter. She provides companionship for her 8-year-old sister by conducting a story and play afternoon for the neighborhood children. These two cases exemplify unselfishness, thrift, and interest in public welfare. A group of club boys learned that a fellow member must leave high school because of his father's death. They came together and husked the corn so that he could go to school. Another fine example of unselfishness and interest in others. A group of club boys sold their best breeding stock to neighbors at the lowest farm price so that they might have worthwhile breeding animals on their farms. This certainly produced good feeling in the community toward these boys and showed interest and desire to cooperate on the part of the boys.

Promptness in beginning club meetings, regularity of attendance and knowledge of parliamentary procedure have helped to bring young people into positions of responsibility. The keeping of accurate reports and records develops a habit of fair play and truthfulness. The youth who is a member of these organizations sets a daily example to others who may aspire to join similar ones.

A sympathetic leader of such groups will do much to develop character traits leading toward good citizenship, especially if he understands the ideals of life and has not forgotten that he too passed along the same road these young people are travelling today. The right type of leader will help to produce citizens who will stand for the rights of the individual and the welfare of the community.

We are all builders. We are born into group life; first the home, which is greatest of all organizations for the building of citizenship because there the foundation is laid. Then the school, the church, and the youth organizations, where the house of life - our traits of character - must be built for practical living, beauty, and stability.

#####