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Foods and Nutrition

THE COMMUNICATOR

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Moscow's MEALS ON WHEELS (*a brief report)

The following is an outline of the content from a more extensive report. Also included are some important considerations for starting such a service. The service has been successfully operated for a little over one year.

- I. Why Offer a Mobile Meal Service?
 - A. To help older people remain in their own home.
 - B. To complement the services of the Home Health Agency.
 - C. To supply meals for emergency situations, i.e. persons recuperating after hospitalization.
 - D. Consideration for other handicapped people.

- II. How to Get Started
 - A. Motivation from one or more interested persons; (one lady in this instance).
 - B. Formation of a committee - representation from churches, service clubs, the Home Health Agency, nurses and senior citizens.
 - C. Experts from the fields of dietetics, public health, and nursing homes were invited.
 - D. An on-going board was formed from the group in "B" and some of the experts were invited to become advisors.
 - E. Planning was thorough. Although there was an immediate need for meals for a few people, it was felt important to proceed slowly to avoid possible oversights which could cause failure.
 - F. Legal aspects were investigated. Successes from other parts of the country were studied. Major aspects considered were: (1) A set of By-Laws, (2) Incorporation, (3) Social Security, (4) Taxes, (5) State health laws, (6) Guides for volunteers, (7) Insurance.
 - G. Obtaining money and volunteers. A letter of purpose stating momentary needs, i.e. an incorporation fee, insurance cost and mailing expenses was sent to service clubs and other civic organizations. Excellent response resulted. Over \$600 was donated, some from individuals. A nucleus of volunteer drivers was also obtained through the letters.
 - H. Kitchen facilities were arranged through a plan with a Nursing Home already operating approved meal service for their residents. Costs were pro-rated on a dialy basis per person to include special holiday

meals and an eight to ten per cent future cost increase. Diets for special conditions were also taken into consideration. Consequently a seven day service of two meals a day for approximately \$1.25 is now an actuality. One meal is hot, planned for consumption after delivery, and the other is a cold or sandwich type meal for the client to save for evening. They are to provide their own beverage.

- I. Possible containers were studied resulting in the use of Coleman chests which hold eight styrofoam divided hot packs with lids. Smaller containers with tight lids are used for salads and desserts. Even ice cream will keep for over 30 minutes in warm weather packed with cold items in a paper bag.
- J. Route sheets are provided for volunteer drivers with special directions for individual client needs. Each hot and cold pack is identified with the client's name to avoid mix-ups. This is especially necessary for the modified diets.
- K. Officers and a delineation of duties for a Board of Directors were established after a trial period to include a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and a program coordinator. Professional advisors were retained and all are volunteers except the program coordinator. Monthly board meetings are held with a few exceptions.

III. Eligibility

- A. No financial barriers. This service, to date, has accommodated very low income as well as moderate to high income persons. (Food stamps may be used in payment.)
- B. Referrals may come from doctors, the hospital, convalescent centers or others. A specific eligibility form is completed for each client.

IV. Miscellaneous

- A. Training sessions for volunteers
- B. Emergency possibilities
- C. Special needs for holidays and for other contacts make use of other community volunteer services.

SOME IMPORTANT DETAILS

1. Need nutritionally prepared foods and meals for special conditions, preferably at the same cost.
2. State health laws must be followed.
3. An interested, volunteer lawyer to provide legal advice.
4. Investigation of all possible Federal and/or State taxes and Social Security.
5. Insuring that articles of incorporation and by-laws are in good shape at the beginning.
6. Proper public announcements advertising incorporation.
7. Other professional advice.

Idaho Extension Home Economists: See Enclosure

(The flower car flyer)

*More detailed information is available upon request. Some single sheet copies of initial letters and forms for volunteers and eligibility as well as one with helpful hints for volunteers are also available.