Kootenai County NANA
(Nutrition and Nurturing Advisor)
September 1993

Situation
In 1993, there were almost 400 young mothers receiving WIC coupons for themselves and their children. Three-fourths of them are married, another 18% are single parents. The mothers have an average of two children.

Many of the mothers have limited food preparation and food shopping skills. They have difficulty making WIC coupons and/or food stamps last throughout the month. Few of the mothers have had any instruction in parenting. Many young families do not have extended family in the area. Therefore they have a weak support system to deal with family matters.

The Response
Federal USDA offered $30,00 in grant money to each state, in an effort to supplement or enhance the basic education already being provided through the WIC program. The nutrition education is to be provided by Cooperative Extension System.

In Idaho, the moneys were split between Kootenai and Bingham counties. The emphasis will be on food preparation, food purchasing and meal planning. In Kootenai county some education will also be provided in parenting and child care.

A local advisory committee was formed to establish the criteria for the Kootenai county program. The committee was instrumental in developing a pre/post evaluation form. They also provided their individual expertise in selecting curriculum and reference materials.

Grant funds became available in July 1993.

Our goal is to work one-on-one mentors with young families (mother under age 25). The main objectives are to offer positive support and education in the areas of food preparation and buying, infant feeding, and parenting.

Achievements
A strong cooperative relationship has developed with WIC personnel and the University of Idaho Extension Home Economist.
Two NANAs (Nutrition and Nurturing Advisor) were hired in July. Each of them will work as a part-time paraprofessional with the program for the next three years. The NANAs received initial training and now attend weekly in-service training sessions.

The NANAs are presently working with a total of 17 young mothers. They are going to the mothers' homes weekly. They have collected basic information about the nutritional knowledge and habits of the mothers and have discussed child care problems.

The Future
- NANAs have only been working with families for two months. They have not reached a maximum client level. This will probably take two to three more months. At that time we will consider hiring another NANA, if there are adequate funds.

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