

# community education: it can be many things

by James W. Satterfield

To many people, the term "community education" means "adult education."

To children, however, it is a recreational program, to senior citizens it is a hobby workshop and field trips, to housewives it is an afternoon activity program, to high school drop-outs it is an evening course toward a diploma, and to hobbyists it is meeting liked-minded persons.

To the proponents of community education, it is the utilization of facilities, people and resources in the furtherance of the education of everyone in the community.

In other words, community education is education that concerns itself with everything that affects the lives of all the citizens within a given community. This concept is actually an educational philosophy which assumes that community problems can be solved through education. It views education as a life time process which differs from the traditional concept of education by extending educational opportunities to all members of the community through a curriculum which is based on life learning and through the use of facilities during hours, days, and months of the year when they are traditionally not in use. The school, through a new professional known as the community school director or coordinator, assumes the responsibility of knowing its neighborhood, opening channels of communication, discovering community problems, organizing the necessary resources, and acting as a coordinator, facilitator and encourager in planning the solutions of problems.

The community school program offers adult courses in any

subject area whenever a sufficient interest is shown. This means course offerings will be extremely varied, ranging from sewing, cooking, family budgets, typing arts and crafts, drug information, alcohol information, neighborhood relations, basketball, chemistry, citizenship, ecology, gardening and photography.

School district facilities are not the only resources in such a program. Civic centers, Y.M.C.A.'s, public libraries, municipal and state parks and their personnel are sometimes included in a program.

The recreation program is an important aspect of community education participation and has two major purposes. It is designed to create interest, and get people into the school. As every good teacher knows, it is necessary to start a child at the level he is at and proceed from there to more advanced stages. In a sense, when working with adults in community education, we must develop programs that interest people if we hope to eventually involve them in other school activities and academic interests.

In many respects, university and college "free universities" are patterned after community education programs. Both provide courses of interest to participants. In general, the courses are determined by the demand of the community.

The future of community education appears to be exceptionally bright. Individuals who are interested in seeking more information please contact Dr. James W. Satterfield, Director of Community Education, Kansas State University, 201 Holton Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506.