



**Ontario Home Economics Association**

# C O M M U N I Q U É

## *Ask A Professional Home Economist*

**For Immediate Release**

### **Let's Do Dinner!**

by Diane O'Shea, P.H.Ec.

The time has come to reclaim a vital family tradition. In a world where speed dominates the lives of individuals and families, a simple call to the table – the dinner table, that is – welcomes the natural opportunity to reconnect with food and family.

An extensive body of research acknowledges that, over the years, family structure and lifestyles have changed. Work, education and leisure activities have given way to demanding schedules of activity. With sports practices, music lessons, and what have you, and a few groceries to pick up in between, daily life is a constant juggle. Critics suggest that overscheduled lives are detrimental to the growth and development of children, adolescents and adults alike. At the same time, trends in obesity and inadequate nutrient intake have been associated with an increasing reliance on fast foods and restaurant eating. In recognizing the challenges that today's families face and knowing the merits of eating together as a family, Professional Home Economists are encouraging a nationwide event, "**Let's Do Dinner**", where families simply have dinner together. Dinner does not have to be an elaborate affair. A gathering around the kitchen table will do. Even a carefully chosen restaurant spot for an away-from-home meal will work.

The custom of sharing a meal dates back thousands of years. Today the custom is the catalyst that seals business deals and celebrates holiday gatherings and family milestones. Why not make family mealtime an opportunity to share the events of the day, to support one another in reaching personal goals, and to plan for future activities? After all, a strong social support network is one of the key determinants of health. In addition, eating together as a family is known to promote healthy food choices and habits.

Sunday, March 21, 2004 marks “**World Home Economics Day**” and the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. With this year’s theme, “Families: Changes and Challenges”, it is a perfect day to “Do Dinner”. Why not gather your family together, serve up some family favourites, and share quality time around your table? Encourage other family members, colleagues, and friends to do the same.

*Diane O’Shea, P.H.Ec. is a London-based Professional Home Economist and Family Studies Department Head at Medway High School. As a partner in a family farm operation and mother of four, Diane recognizes the real value of meals eaten together as a family.*

***The Ontario Home Economics Association**, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. The Association welcomes your comments about “Let’s Do Dinner”.*

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