

COMMUNITY COORDINATORS (continued)

split. Today spouses are not as willing to devote their personal time unpaid. So the CC position ensures that there is a structure and continuity in the performance of these tasks. I also like the fact that all the services of the CC are available to everyone at the Post. This discourages cliquism.

V. Judd: The program, in fact, was created to respond to some of the needs of the foreign service as outlined in the McDougall Commission report. Moreover, spouses usually find plenty "to do" at post, although their contributions are not always recognized. A glance at the community coordinator salary scale should convince people that while the program gives a few spouses "something to do", it cannot be confused with an opportunity for gainful employment!

M. Mailloux: Nonsense. The origins of the program lie in the McDougall Report. Unfortunately people at posts are usually not as interested in their post "family" as they ought to be in my opinion, and so need to be motivated. If everyone would be friendly and helpful to new arrivals, then the CC program could be discarded. Until then, the CC program is a tool to help people settle in to their new post and enjoy that period in their life, and hopefully be congenial to other families arriving at post.

• *What other improvements might be made by the community coordinators over and above the mandate of the program?*

V. Bryce: I think there would be a great advantage in having a two way flow of information between HQ and the



Valerie Judd

CC. Last October a meeting was held in Ottawa of all the returned CCs to share our experiences, and to discuss some of the problems with those responsible for the program in the hopes of improving it. I have arranged for another meeting this November for all the CCs who have just returned to Ottawa and hopefully we will be able to pass on our collective comments to the Department again. It would be a good idea to establish a regular meeting to those who administer the program and those who have recently done the job at Post.

V. Judd: I believe the community coordinator's mandate is sufficiently broad. The coordinators at different posts must determine what the specific needs of their community are and refine the program to address those needs. My experience as a coordinator in Washington has led me to conclude that perhaps counselling and support could be part of the coordinator's 'official' duties, particularly at a large post.

M. Mailloux: One could help teens find jobs during summer holidays; organise pre-school groups where none exist; help spouses find employment, whether voluntary or paid; organise garage sales/children's clothing, toy and sports equipment exchanges; organise parties, BBQs, youth groups, trips to places of local interest.

• *In your opinion, what does the future hold for the program?*

V. Bryce: People will become accustomed to the concept of there being a CC at Posts and to the advantages of having such a person. The number of CC positions will increase.

V. Judd: The credibility of the community coordinator program will increase and the program will expand as funding becomes available. The program is here to stay in my opinion.

M. Mailloux: I think the future is bright. The need is definitely there and