

HISTORY

In February 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed the first national vocational education act into law. This act created federally supported, state-run programs of vocational education including Home Economics (known today as Family and Consumer Sciences). The establishment of vocational Home Economics education laid the foundation for the development of Future Homemakers of America (FHA), known today as Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

As early as the 1920s, high school Home Economics students belonged to Home Economics clubs that were sponsored by adult groups interested in Home Economics education. Sponsors belonged to organizations such as Home Economics education supervisory staffs of state departments of education, the American Home Economics Association (AHEA), and Home Economics departments in colleges and universities. These clubs had many different names and structures and lacked an organized cooperation between state groups. Only those clubs that worked under the sponsorship of the AHEA had any affiliation with a national group.

In 1943, as a result of increased interest in one program for high school Home Economics students, the AHEA, in cooperation with Home Economics Branch of the U.S. Office of Education Division of Vocational and Technical Education, appointed a committee to study high school Home Economics clubs. The committee concluded that all existing programs could be strengthened by a unified effort. In June of that year, Home Economics leaders from 29 states met in Chicago, Illinois, and discussed plans to develop one national organization.

One year later, in June 1944, an interim committee, selected from participants at the March meeting and student and adult adviser representatives of Home Economics clubs, started plans for the development of a national organization.

On June 11, 1945, a group of national officer candidates from several sub-regions and a group of advisers reconvened in Chicago to draw up a temporary constitution.

Additionally, they selected a name for the proposed national youth organization: Future Homemakers of America (FHA). A sister organization, New Homemakers of America (NHA), was founded for black students in 16 states where schools were segregated by law.

The AHEA, now the American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), and the U.S. Office of Education, now Department of Education, under the direction of its Home Economics staff in the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, became co-sponsors of the organization. The National Education Association (NEA), through its department of Home Economics, and the American Vocation Association (AVA), now the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), through its Home Economics division, became cooperating groups.

FHA started with 42 affiliated state associations, 2,487 chapters, 92,516 members, and a \$7,200 loan from AHEA. Within the first year the loan was repaid, and FHA was incorporated in the District of Columbia as a self-supporting, private, nonprofit organization. Operating funds came from the national dues of 10 cents per member.

Works Cited

"History." *The Handbook to Ultimate Leadership*. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, 2009, pp. 6.

HISTORICAL FIGURES

Edna p. Amidon is considered one of the most influential leaders in the founding of FHA. She was a futuristic educator and strong promoter of junior and senior high Home Economics education for more than 50 years. She served as chief of the Home Economics Education Service, Division of Vocational Education in the U.S. Office of Education, and as the organization's first board chair.

Dr. Hazel Frost was the first national adviser for both FHA and NHA.

Works Cited

"History." *The Handbook to Ultimate Leadership*. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, 2009, pp. 6.