

## 2019 Area Heart of FCE Winners

### **Iris Sanford, Overland Park – Johnson County - Northeast Area Heart of FCE**

For certain, this year's FCE theme of "FCE, Making a Difference" is at the heart of one individual Harmony Homemakers is nominating for this year's Heart of FCE Award is Iris Sanford. Serving in her 60 years of membership, FCE and Harmony Homemakers has assisted Iris in numerous ways through the years. Iris has more than reciprocated by helping build Harmony Homemakers in positive ways in what FCE does and stands for today.

During summer of 1943, at the tender age of ten, Iris contracted polio after breaking her arm, the paralysis affecting her right arm. Iris was hospitalized for three months. Being right handed, she learned to use her left hand, overcoming a huge obstacle at a very young age. After marrying Jim Sanford and after three of their four girls were born, Iris, age 27, was invited by a church friend to join Harmony Homemakers. She overcame another obstacle upon joining; extreme shyness. At that time the large group included many farmers' wives in the Southwest Olathe area. She is now the only living member of that early group. Like today, the group back then met in homes. As an added benefit to members with young children, a babysitter was provided for all members' children. Lunch was organized and provided for members in the early years prior to each meeting time. Crafting was also a part of their meetings, but sometimes they met for crafts at alternate times and places. She fondly remembers making a purse and a table centerpiece that she used for many years. The lessons given focused primarily on increasing knowledge and skills in homemaking and child care. Her favorite lessons were the cooking lessons and she certainly is a marvelous cook today!

The lessons and activities contributed to her newly-acquired leadership skills, with various leadership roles as follows: for 9 years she served as President and 3 years she served as Vice-President of Harmony Homemakers; two years she served as President of the County Council; for 9 years she represented her FCE as Council Representative; and for numerous years, she served as Secretary and Treasurer of her FCE. When you look up the word "humble" in the dictionary, you would find a picture of Iris. She would never blow her own horn. And she never says NO! Her very loving and naturally giving nature assisted in helping develop many former and current activities for the FCE, to name a few: in 1977, the FCE started a plant exchange, some of those plants still visible in friend's gardens. That same year, along with others, she started an annual auction to benefit and grow the FCE's treasury. She was involved and helped organize an August family picnic and white elephant sale.

With the assistance of Ann Debus, the two began a successful involvement with TLC that started with taking a monthly birthday cake to the young residents. We now continue to take cookies for various functions there. We take new socks and underwear to the residents at Christmas time. Iris helped start monthly visits to a nursing home, now named Azria, providing cookies and soda to residents while we all play Bingo. She began a yearly field trip for her FCE and some of the destinations included Johnson County Museum, Greenwood Tea Room, Overland Park Arboretum, Marble Factor, Ernie Miller Native Preserve Park, Lecompton, KS, Historical Sites, and most recently Strawberry Hill.

Iris' family grew to four daughters, but she and Jim enlarged their family to include two foster sons. The two remain an integral part of their large family today. The community has benefited greatly by the Sanford's. Jim built Iris a swimming pool in 1988 and built a house over it. Iris still gives free water aerobic classes three days a week at least twice on those days rain or shine! Is it any wonder that Iris has not been troubled with post polio syndrome as so most polio victims have? What she gives to others so willingly has also benefited her! Jim began purchasing exotic animals such as llamas, camels, and peacocks – a petting zoo was born! Jim and Iris regularly visited shut-ins and prayed with them. Iris taught children's Sunday School classes and Iris started and still leads a scripture study class for women.

Iris is always one who supports and encourages those around her with her genuine warmth and great smile. Iris does "make a difference" in all she does and to all she encounters. Her life's path has been a great example of all that FCE stands for and strives to be.

### **Linda Hess, Marion – McPherson County -South Central Area Heart of FCE**

Linda has been a Canton Dizzy Dames FCE member for 21 years, has served in all offices, and has been and is president for more than ten years. Linda gives FCE lessons each year and usually a meal is connected with the lesson. Linda planned some CHARACTER COUNTS! sessions for the school system; supervises the annual FCE booth for the McPherson County Fair.

Linda attends the South Central Area meetings and the State FCE meetings each year. Linda has been and again in serving on the McPherson County Educational Program Committee and has served on the South Central Area Educational Program Committee. Linda gives a lot of time, serving details of the presidency and skills in projects associated with lessons. She fills out the Accomplishment Report with volunteer hours spent, tabulated as needed.