NEWS The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington 98505

for immediate release
December 12, 1973

for further information
Judy Annis, 866-6128

How can American families effectively deal with the energy crisis? What adjustments to their life styles will they have to make? How can they more efficiently use the limited resources they have?

Some answers to these kinds of questions may soon be available thanks to a research project being undertaken by a faculty member and 22 undergraduate students at The Evergreen State College in cooperation with Olympia-area families willing to volunteer as control groups in the study. Families who participate will be asked to live for one month within some severe energy restrictions.

Each of the families who volunteer for the project will agree to consume not more than 10 gallons of gasoline for a week. They will cut their use of water and electricity in half; they will keep their thermostats set at 60 degrees, and they will live within sharply reduced food and entertainment budgets.

The results of their sacrifices "may help all of us deal more effectively with the adjustments we may eventually have to make," according to Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl, an applied behaviorial scientist with a Ph.D. in organizational behavior from Cleveland's Case Western Reserse University, who is coordinating the study.

"It's becoming increasingly obvious that we will all be facing changes in our life styles because of the shortage of energy sources," Gerstl says. "We want to study how families make adjustments to these shortages now, before the crisis deepens any further. "

Gerstl's students, all members of an Evergreen Coordinated Studies program called the Individual in Contemporary Society, originated the idea for the study before the Middle East war so dramatically affected the fuel shortage.

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"They're extremely concerned about the shortages we face," he says. "They realize it will greatly alter our standards of living and are anxious to gauge the effect these alterations will have on an average family."

Students have already prepared an in-depth study on the effects the energy crisis may have on families based on reactions of families to similar shortages during the depression and World War II. They have gathered detailed documentation on the energy crisis itself and have spent most of Fall Quarter preparing for work with the volunteer test families, who will be the first in the nation to participate in such a study.

"Substantial amounts of research have already been done on the quantity of natural resources still available for consumption," Gerstl points out. "In addition, there is a wealth of statistics available which estimate when existing supplies may be exhausted.

"But," he adds, "there has been surprizingly little research into the effects these shortages will have on the American family and on our culture as a whole. In fact, this is the first study in the country which attempts to measure the effects of drastic energy restrictions on average families."

Twenty-five families are being sought to volunteer for the program. They must be available between the first of February and the first of April. All families will reside in single family dwellings and will have one to four children.

The first month of the study, students will interview family members weekly, so that students "can become aware of what the family's usual interactions are," Gerstl says. At the same time families will keep a log of their electrical, water and gasoline useage, and will write daily journals.

Then, about the first of March, the real test begins.

Families will be asked to cut their use of electricity and water by 50 per cent based on their consumption rate for February and March of 1972. They will be informed of the consumption rate of specific appliances and will be responsible for rationing their use of water and electricity accordingly.

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They will be asked to use less than ten gallons of gasoline a week and to live within a sharply cut food and entertainment budget. In addition, several times during the month, families will be telephoned about an "air pollution alert," which will require that they stay in the house as much as possible because of a dangerously high ozone count which limits outdoor activity. Families will also be required to keep their heat at 60 degrees the entire time.

"We realize participants will experience some discomfort," Gerstl says, "but we strongly feel that the experiences which each family endures will have far reaching and beneficial implications for the greater population."

Each family will enter the experiment voluntarily, he points out, and each will have a clear understanding of the conditions under which its members will be required to live.

"We're certain these conditions will not endanger the health or well being of any individual involved, and we guarantee all participants immediate release from the experiment if an emergency situation arises," he adds. All participants will remain anonymous unless they request otherwise.

Throughout the two-month period, students will conduct weekly interviews with family members as individuals and as part of a group, and they will test and retest the participants.

Spring Quarter, Gerstl's students, all of whom are studying social sciences, will compile and compare the data they have gathered and present their findings to both the Evergreen community and the community at large.

In the meantime, they're keeping busy recruiting participants; gaining interviewing, observation and testing skills; detailing specific plans; and recruiting sponsors for the program.

Persons interested in volunteering as participants or as sponsors of the volunteer study can contact Gerstl at 866-6638 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or at 866-0784 evenings.

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Kathleen Hoey, a Gig Harbor student at The Evergreen State College, is among 22 undergraduates helping conduct a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. Ms. Hoey, daughter of Mrs. Richard Hoey, Route 4, and a graduate of Peninsula High School, is studying psychology under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

Dick Nichols, Director
Information Services

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Catherine Nielsen, a Friday Harbor student at The Evergreen State College, is among 22 undergraduates helping conduct a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. Ms. Nielsen, a graduate of Friday Harbor High School and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Einar Neilsen, is studying psychology and sociology under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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A Centralia student at The Evergreen State College, Ernest L. White, is among 22 undergraduates who are participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will adjust to the energy crisis. A graduate of Toledo High School, White (of 815 North Pearl) is the son of Virginia Reaster, Chehalis. He is studying philosophy, sociology and psychology under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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A Bellevue student at The Evergreen State College, Craig Conner, is among 22 undergraduates participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will adjust to the energy crisis. A graduate of New Port High School, Conner is a social science student studying under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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Two Edmonds High School graduates are among 22 undergraduates at The Evergreen State College who are participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will adjust to the energy crisis. Involved are Dara Bray and Linda McKamey, both currently residents of Everett (please see attached).

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An Evergreen High School graduate, Kenneth J. Cole, is among 22 students from The Evergreen State College who are participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Loyal Cole (29 S.W. 130th Place), Cole is studying under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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Two Bremerton students at The Evergreen State College are among 22 students participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. Krista E. Dietz, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Robert J. Dietz, 2021 East 16th St., and Janet Ann Bernholt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Bernhoft, 2425 Rocky Pt. Rd., are studying under the guidance of Evergreen Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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Three Seattle students at The Evergreen State College are participating in a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis.

Sandy Arcorace, a graduate of Franklin High School, Kenneth James, of Burien's Evergreen High School, and Terri Ferris, of Shoreline High School, are among 22 social science students conducting the study under the guidance of Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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Dorothy Jaskar, an Aberdeen student at The Evergreen State College, is among 22 undergraduates helping conduct a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. Mrs. Jaskar, wife of Dr. R. O. Jaskar of Tacoma, is a graduate of Aberdeen's Weatherwax High School and is studying psychology and counseling at Evergreen under the guidance of Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (please see attached).

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Dorothy Jaskar, a Tacoma student at The Evergreen State College, is among 22 undergraduates helping conduct a unique pilot program to test how American families will deal with the energy crisis. Mrs. Jaskar, wife of Dr. R. O. Jaskar, 236 Lake Louise Drive, and an Evergreen transfer student from Fort Steilacoom Community College, is studying psychology and counseling under the guidance of Faculty Member Ted Gerstl (see attached, please).

Dick Nichols, Director
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