



OUR PARISH COUNCIL Bernard Lyons

The runaway problem has been with us for years. Stories like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn told about ambitious kids, who went to seek their own lives away from their homes and communities.

Recently, the phenomenon has been made even more severe with an affluent society and a youth culture that gives kids the wherewithal and the information needed to establish themselves away from home.

Currently, the tragic story of the 27 boys murdered in Houston has brought the problem of teenage runaways to the front pages and caused fear in many homes with youngsters.

No one knows exactly how many runaways there are, but the experts estimate annual figures of 15,000 in Washington, 2,500 in Minneapolis, 9,500 in San Diego, and more than 16,000 in Chicago, to give a few examples.

The number of runaways is not only increasing, but the age of the runaways is dropping, so that nearly half of the runaways in New York City are in the 11-to-14-year of age category.

There are significantly more runaway girls than boys.

Significantly, most runaways never leave their home turf. Seven of the 27 boys killed in Houston were from the same neighborhood.

According to Chicago police officials, of the 9,551 runaways apprehended in Chicago, 8,764 were from Chicago, and 787 were

'My Neighbor' Focus of CWU Celebration

Church Women United in the Rochester area will celebrate World Community Day Nov. 2 in Brighton Presbyterian Church, 1775 East Ave. A service built on the Christian concept of "neighbor," as set forth in Jesus's story of the Good Samaritan, will begin at 10 a.m.

Mrs. Joseph B. Corcoran, a teacher in the East Irondequoit school system, will talk about sensitivity to American Indian culture and religion. Mrs. Corcoran is a Tonawanda-Seneca Indian educated in State University colleges, and she frequently is invited to address national conferences exploring the problems that beset minorities in the United States.

There will be exhibits indicating the various charitable activities of CWU. The organization provides a retail outlet for the work of artisans taking part in self-help projects all over the world. There will be a sale of such things, and also of hand-drawn Christmas cards from similar cooperatives.

Coffee and dessert will be offered and nursery care provided. Mrs. Thomas Kerwick of Pinecrest Drive is denominational chairwoman for Catholics in CWU.

Crossword Answer

C	A	M	E	O	T	R	A	S	H		
I	N	A	D	V	E	R	T	E	N	C	E
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from outside the city, including the suburbs. Another 39 Chicago runaways were arrested in other cities and turned over to Chicago police.

Even though the police report that "99 plus percent" of missing youngsters notify their parents, return home or are returned by the police, the runaway's trip may lead to a complex system of street life, police, courts, social agencies — and worse, like the Houston murders.

There are probably as many different reasons why kids run away as there are youngsters who leave home.

The principal antidote for runaways seems to be temporary shelter homes. Alternative House in Washington, D.C., has had 60 youngsters use their live-in facilities during the past six months, and only three have run away again.

Temporary shelter homes can give youngsters immediate, unhassled help. It gives them a chance to catch their breath, and can keep them from being charged as delinquents and institutionalized.

Many police officials see the runaway as a social, not a police, problem. The runaway drains the department's resources, and either he gets institutionalized or sent back to a bad family situation without counseling.

Congress has started to become aware of the problem. In June, the Senate passed the Runaway Youth Act; hearings on a similar bill are underway in the House. If finally approved, the bills would give \$10 million annually for three years to provide temporary shelter care for runaways.

Runaways concern some of your parish families. The parish council should examine the situation in the community. Begin by contacting your local police department and the diocesan Catholic Charities office. Also, write for a very helpful booklet, "Runaway House Handbook," available from the National Institute for Mental Health. Write NIMH, Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health, Section on Youth and Student Affairs, 5600 Fisher Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Laity Council Elects President

New Orleans (RNS) — An estimated 2,000 delegates from around the country heard the call go out for activism by church groups as they gathered here for the second convention of the National Council of Catholic Laity.

Mrs. John Eckstein of Iowa City, Iowa, was elected the second president of the NCCL.

William H. Sandweg of Annandale, Va., was chosen as the new president of the National Council of Catholic Men (NCCM), while Mrs. G. Sam Zilly was elected president of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW).

Mrs. Eckstein, who served as secretary of the NCCW for two years, said the first item on her agenda will be to study the concerns expressed at the NCCL assembly as reflected in reports from the various groups.

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