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JOAN M. SMITH, Editor

Living, Learning, Understanding A Student's Special Way of Life

By Joan M. Smith

Mainstreaming, introducing physically handicapped people into the academic and work aspects of everyday community life, has its advocates and opponents. One person who has strong views on the subject as well as first hand experience with the process, is Marca Grattet, a senior at St. Agnes High School.

Marca has cerebral palsy and says about the move her parents made to mainstream her, "It was the most important decision they made in my life."

RapAround asked her why?

"If you are going to work and live in the community you have to be a part of it," she answered. She explained that not mainstreaming handicapped students with normal intelligence can be a problem because being in classes with the same few students and not being aware of set academic standards can be restrictive.

Marca admitted that when first mainstreamed it was a shock to her because of the fast pace around her. It wasn't long however, before she had settled in at St. John's on Humboldt Street and went to work creating a place for herself.

Marca has a bubbly personality which immediately puts those around her at ease. Behind this outgoing graciousness, however is a young lady with strong opinions. She knows what she is for and what she is against, though she treats the against matters gently.

"Being handicapped is a part of me as a person that won't ever change but it's not all of me. I'm a person first and then a handicapped person and I don't expect the world to be shaped for me."

MARCA

Her philosophy is the gentle approach and therefore, there are no foot-stomping, aggressive barrages from her to make the public aware of the handicapped people and their problems. Though she is aware that this is needed she noted, "You have to work with people to change things that have to be changed. Not be an opposing group."

Another aspect of social concern she once didn't appreciate was the campaigns and telethons which she considered a form of begging. When she was contacted by the Rochester Easter Seal program she at first refused to become involved. Then on contemplating the matter, one constant thought kept repeating itself — "You can't change things if you stay out of it." So, she agreed to participate, became the Easter Poster girl for 1977 and has appeared on the telethon every year since then.

Marca is a busy girl as is attested to by her activities inside and outside of school and Sister Christina Welch who noted, "She is always helping out."

At St. Agnes she is secretary of the senior class, a member of the Human Development Committee and the Glee Club, and is involved with the Red Cross Inter High Council. Her outside commitments include volunteer work for the Association for Retarded Citizens at the Al Sigl Center and the Wheelchair Jockey Program ver at Monroe Community Hospital.

In her spare time she reads nd embroiders and then here's the half-hour a day ight after school and, "right before I start hitting the books," for the physical therapy exercises.

There is no embarrassment in discussing with Marca her disability — she doesn't apologize for it nor hide behind it.

"Being handicapped is a part of me as a person that won't ever change," she declared, "but it's not all me. I'm a person first and then a handicapped person and I don't expect the world to be shaped for me."

She best appreciates her fellow companions when, if she asks for help and at that particular moment they are busy and on the run, they are honest with her and tell her no. "I think that's great," she smiled adding, "I don't want them to just drop everything to help me."

Marca puts strong emphasis on the word person and in her quest to remain an individual and not be stereotyped, she tries to explain the illogic of society's tendency to do so.

"Just because a person has a disability," she explained, "doesn't mean they understand everyone that has a disability. And the reverse is true. Just because a person doesn't have a disability doesn't mean they don't understand the problems."

Another matter which bothers Marca, is seeing others (disabled) without motivation "to do anything about their lives."

"I'm pushed from something inside," she said of her own motivation. "Since I was oung I knew the importance of education and I still want to learn more."

True to her goal, Marca will continue her learning experiences at the University of Arizona come September. She will pursue a liberal arts course in preparation for either a career in law or hospital administration. She is also excited about attending the State University at Albany this summer for a course designed to prepare handicapped students for college. In fact, the course begins the day after her graduation from St. Agnes on June 21. She'll hardly have time to feel the pangs of parting from St. Agnes or her fellow classmates, but they'll miss her.

"She's been a real plus for us," commented Sister Anne Guerin, principal, "and we're going to miss her."

Merit Student Plans Space Career

Pam Melroy, a senior at Bishop Kearney High School, has won a Xerox Corporation Merit Scholarship Award and an Air Force ROTC scholarship. She will attend Wellesley College in Boston for a major in Physics.

Pam has been a member of the BK forensics team since her freshman year and is a member of the National Honor Society.

"Being in the plays," she said was her greatest experience while attending BK. She has had the lead in all the Fall plays since her sophomore year.

"I'm looking forward to getting into higher education," she stated and explained that in high school it's general education like Math, English but when in college a person begins working in their field.

PAM MELROY

Pam plans a future as an astronaut and credits this goal with being the major motivating force behind her achievements. After college she will serve in the United States Air Force where she will do her grad work in astronomy and pilot training.

Talent Show May 18

Nazareth Academy's PATON organization will present a parent-teacher talent show this weekend to raise money for the school. "A Touch of Broadway" is scheduled for 8 p.m. May 18 and 19, and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 20, in the academy auditorium, 1001 Lake Ave. The price of admission is $2 for adults, $1 for students and children.

On The Go

BISHOP KEARNEY

May 16-18 — AP exams.

Wednesday, May 16 — Speeches for Student Council president.

Thursday, May 17 — Student Council president elections.

Saturday, May 19 — "Lilac Time" performance by Marching Kings; Parents Dance at school.

May 22-23 — Campaigning for Student Council officers.

Wednesday, May 23 — Student Council elections.

CARDINAL MOONEY

May 17-20 — Carnival.

Friday, May 18 — Junior Prom.

Tuesday, May 22 — Women's Guild Tureen Supper.

DESALES

Saturday, May 19 — Spring Dance, 9-1 a.m.

MCQUAID

Thursday, May 17 — Glee Club assembly, 9:35-10:20 a.m.; AP Biology exam.

Friday, May 18 — Student Government Forum, 10:34-11:19 a.m.; Chemistry AP exam.

Monday, May 21 — Canisius High School Choir, 10:34-11:19 a.m.

Tuesday, May 22 — Driver Education registration.

NAZARETH

Thursday, May 17 — Sophomore class election speeches; junior class election explanations; Student Council voting; Theology and Art department meetings.

Friday, May 18 — Student Council voting; Dress up- down day; PATON show, "Touch of Broadway", 8 p.m.

Saturday, May 19 — Maplewood Festival Concert by Cathy Amesbury, 1-1:20 p.m.; PATON show, 8 p.m.

Sunday, May 20 — PATON show, 2 p.m.; Aquinas Band Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 23 — Junior class speeches.

NOTRE DAME

Friday, May 18 — Junior Day; Chemistry AP exam; Liturgy, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 19 — Parents Festival.

OUR LADY OF MERCY

Friday, May 18 — May Day.

PATON Holds Event

The annual Parents and Teachers of Nazareth (PATON) Communion breakfast was held, April 29. Father Brian Murphy, chaplain, celebrated the Eucharist in the school auditorium and students were lectors for the readings and prayer petitions. The Schaffer family presented the Offertory gifts.

The Student-Faculty Folk group provided music and the school Liturgy Committee planned the service. Following the Mass, more than 200 people gathered in the school cafeteria for breakfast. Chairpersons for the event were Mr. and Mrs. Louis De Fabio.

JA Names Achievers

At the recent Junior Achievement Awards Banquet, May 8, Michelle DeLorm and Sue Ritter from Our Lady of Mercy High School, were named Best Sales Person and Vice President of Sales, respectively. Kathy Troidle also from Mercy took Secretary of the Year while her classmate Elizabeth Culotta, President of the Year. Mike Szatkowski from Bishop Kearney won the Quality Control honors.