

RAP AROUND

Joan M. Smith, Editor

Sense of Belonging Results From Answering Needs

By Joan M. Smith

"A little bit of trepidation at first," said Brother William Clifford but then enthusiasm and enjoyment followed. He referred to the attitude of the Cardinal Mooney seniors, who, in conjunction with their theology course, are participating in a community service program. The program is required with at least 10 hours of committed service given with no time out from classes to fulfill the commitment.

"It's completely on their own time," said Brother Clifford who explained that the theology class had had an elective social justice curriculum but it was decided to incorporate an active service program which started last September.

"The reception by the students has been excellent," he said, and the students who recently talked with RapAround bore out his statement.

"I've always wanted to help people," said Rita Ranalletta, who visits the elderly in Most Precious Blood parish, "and the program has helped me to get started."

Aside from the "helping others" aspect of the program, there is the required course curricula to pursue. Students are required to keep a journal according to a specific format. There are quizzes on readings from the textbook, "Faith and Justice: Living as Christians on a Small Planet." The students also have to submit a reflection paper after hearing guest speakers and a two-four page thesis summarizing their experiences. Also during the semester each student meets with a moderator, one they have chosen from among the faculty, administration, or pastoral assistants, to discuss their experiences and what they have learned from them.

And Brother Clifford is giving out gold stars to the people who have willingly offered their time and energy

to these students. He is also giving out stars to community and institutional volunteer directors for their cooperation.

"They keep the kids busy," he said and added, "There's nothing worse than to volunteer service and then have nothing to do."

Having nothing to do is not a worry for the Mooney volunteers. Their services are being given in 47 different facilities which include parish schools and churches, hospitals, nursing homes, volunteer ambulances, soup kitchens, and in agencies like the Legal Aid Society and Boy Scouts of America. Their work encompasses CCD religious education, child care, special education, visiting the elderly, tutoring, and coaching — all areas of challenge.

For the Mooney students the challenges have come in different ways. For Maria Nicchitta, who tutors at Mother of Sorrows, the challenge was not to give up.

"My pupil didn't know how to add or subtract," she said, "and I didn't think she'd ever get through it." But everything fell into place and the pupil progressed with her lessons. "I felt a great sense of self-fulfillment," Maria said. "I felt good because she felt good. It was all worthwhile."

For Kelly Cass, who volunteers at The Mary Cariola Center the challenge was pity. "At first," she said, "I felt sorry for the kids." But after she worked with them for a while and saw how they adapted, accepted life, and were happy, she felt better.

The challenge for Rita was in convincing the people she visits that because this semester's volunteer service phase was ending, she wasn't going to forget them.

This termination of services was a challenge for all the volunteers and one they had to deal with alone.

"The kids have had to be very adult about it," Brother

Clifford said and explained that not only did they have to explain their leaving, but had had to make the initial personal contact with the institutions and agencies about their volunteer commitment.

Seeing if institutions were providing the personal as well as physical needs of the people committed to their care is one purpose of the program. According to Mike Roemer, who monitors outside the intensive care unit at Park Ridge Hospital, there is definitely caring inside an institution.

Other purposes are to have the students discover more about themselves and their talents; look at others and see how they are serving the community; learn how Jesus fits into what they are doing.

"Just doing the work I'm doing... just doing good for someone is doing Jesus' work," Mike said.

Kelly agreed and added, "I think the biggest thing is that it's helped me find Christ in others."

"The program," continued Mike, "has also given me a sense that the community needs me. I've done something and it makes me feel good," he said.

With Tom Minor, who tutors at Our Lady of Good Council, his experience in the program has taught him to make decisions and to see how he fits in the community.

But perhaps it was Maria who spoke for many people, students and adults, when she said she was glad she had the opportunity to participate in the program because she might not have offered her services "It's made me grow," she said.

These five students along with 128 of their fellow seniors have completed their service time but 160 seniors are right behind them for next semester. Did the old-hands have any advice for the



Standing are Maria, Tom and Rita, and seated are Mike, Brother Clifford who is in his fourth year of teaching Theology at Cardinal Mooney, and Kelly.

newcomers? They certainly find it's really fulfilling... "Go into it with an open mind... did and it included..." "Don't be scared to talk to... getting involved..." "You'll people, it's not so bad..." got."

EQUAL TIME

Do you see a time when computers will become the classroom teachers?

NAZARETH

MARY JO REYNDERS
Junior
National Honor Society



"I do foresee a time when a computer will be a teacher, but we'll lose something with this technological teaching method. I feel the computer lacks the ability to focus on the individual needs of each student. I think the computer has its place, but it has a good side and a bad side. People are depending on computers for knowledge and not developing their own intelligence."

JANET CHIN
Sophomore
Spanish Club



"Yes, in about 10 years. I don't think it's a good idea. If you have a question, there will be no one around to answer it, and there won't be anyone to develop a student/teacher relationship. I like the computer age. It's a great help to businesses."

JEANNE KOMOROWSKI
Senior
Perosians



"Yes, definitely — especially since the man of the year is a computer. More emphasis is being put on the computer. It's not a good idea because we'll miss the personal contact with other people. For the people who grow up with computers it will be easier."

DIANE CASEY
Freshman
chorus



"Yes, in about 10 to 15 years they will. If it happened now it would take some adjusting. Computers make the work of businesses a lot easier but the caring that the teachers do will be lost."

JANETTE DAUENHAUER
Senior
National Honor Society



"No. I think they could be an advantage to the teacher but they'll never replace a teacher. They may change the teacher's job in the future. The teacher might have to do different things. The teacher might have to teach the student to work with a computer which will give out facts, but it's better with a teacher incorporating his or her experience and opinion into the lesson."

CHERYL McALLISTER
Junior



"Yes. I don't like the idea. A teacher gets to know a person's personality, but a computer doesn't. The personal touch is lost. We have an Atari at home and, personally, I don't like it. I feel it's a waste of time. Computers are putting too many people out of work and I think computers are a major cause for the economic situation we are in now."

KIRSTIN PEDERSEN
Freshman
Drama Club



"Definitely. I like the idea. I think the computers are fun. You'd lose the friendship of the teacher, but computers are good because so much can be stored in them and they are helpful to business."

MARY GEORGE
Junior



"Yes, and I don't think it's a good idea because if you need special help, there won't be anyone around to stay after school to help you. We're losing a lot of jobs through the use of computers."



Winner's Circle

RapAround weekly will run a photo of a group of students taken somewhere in the diocese. One person will be circled and if that person brings the clipping to the Courier-Journal before noon of the Tuesday following our publication date, he or she will receive \$5. This week's photo was taken at Nazareth Academy during a study period. The person circled should bring the clipping to Joan M. Smith, Courier-Journal, 114 South Union St., by noon, Tuesday, Jan. 25, to receive \$5.

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