

# Mercy student fashions friendship through sewing

By Rob Cullivan

Every Thursday night, Alicia Ainsworth leaves the Volunteers of America Adult Care Facility in stitches. A volunteer in the facility's weekly sewing class for women, the 16-year-old junior from Our Lady of Mercy High School has woven friendship and fabric for the last year and a half with patients at the Rochester home for poor, disabled and/or handicapped adults.

More than 20 women at the home take the sewing class as a form of therapy, Ainsworth said. Each client makes three outfits between September and May, but the benefits of their work go far beyond having a new item to add to their wardrobes. "It's something that they wear and something that they can use, and to know that they did it makes them feel really good," she said.

Feeling good about herself and others is what motivates Ainsworth, who became interested in the class last year when she learned of it through the community service club at Mercy. She had wanted to participate in an extra-curricular activity, and the class seemed to be the perfect opportunity to combine her interest in arts and crafts with her practical idealism. "I didn't think I could change the world, but I thought I could talk to people," she said.

Talking to the patients is Ainsworth's way of getting them to open up to her. Yet the volunteer cautions that sincerity is the key to such conversations. Otherwise, she said, "You can scare them away. Just act natural, like a caring

person," she remarked.

Caring for people is Ainsworth's way of getting closer to God. She also likes to express her conviction through her artwork. "I draw people. That's what I think God is — people." People of all ages delight her. "I love kids and older people. They have so much in common. They're not trying to get anywhere. They're just being themselves."

One person who likes to be herself with Ainsworth is a patient whom she befriended. Each volunteer in the class is assigned one or two women to work with, and Ainsworth helps a 64-year-old woman with her sewing each week. Although the patient was shy at first, she quickly became friends with the student, and the two now greet each other with a hug and a kiss each week.

The best way to earn patients' embraces is to talk about their interests, Ainsworth said, noting that she often asks her friend how her attempts to learn to read and write are faring. The pair have exchanged birthday cards, and Ainsworth hopes to keep the friendship going beyond her high school years.

Following graduation from Mercy, Ainsworth plans to pursue the study of musical and art therapy. Both areas will give her opportunities to work with the emotionally handicapped. Until then, she can be found on Thursday nights at the adult home, composing a symphony of caring inspired by the rhythm of a score of sewing machines.



Linda Dow Hayes, Courier-Journal

Alicia Ainsworth, an 11th-grader at Our Lady of Mercy High School, volunteers her time at a weekly sewing class for women offered by the Volunteers of America Adult Care Facility.

## Coming of Age

By Christopher Carstens  
NC News Service

Sometimes it seems that every magazine published is filled with articles on how to make yourself better looking, healthier and more successful.

Self-improvement is as American as Thanksgiving dinner or the Pledge of Allegiance.

That drive for self-improvement is never stronger than on Dec. 31. New Year's Eve is the official time for making promises to yourself: Next year you will stop "pigging out" on sweets, swear off gossip forever and not be late to school even once.

Self-improvement is a wonderful idea, but there's a problem. Most New Year's resolutions start with the idea that something about you needs fixing. The emphasis is always on what's wrong.

Unfortunately, reviewing your failures and shortcomings often makes it more likely that you will repeat exactly the same mistakes all over again. In fact, focusing on past errors does nothing to prepare you for success.

For example, imagine that you did poorly on an English quiz. You won't improve that test score by lying in bed all night thinking, "What a dope. I didn't study anywhere near enough."

Feeling badly about not studying won't help you get ready for the next test. In fact, your negative emotions are likely to interfere with your preparation. It's harder to study when you're depressed.

Just as dwelling on failure makes repeated failure more probable, when you focus on success and remember the things you do well, you become more likely to succeed again.

Let's say you do well on a test. By thinking

through what you did to get the good grade, you increase your chances of getting another high mark.

This New Year's Eve, resolve to spend more time thinking about the things you do right. Instead of reviewing last year's problems, spend some time remembering the successes you experienced in 1988.

You may recall the pride you felt about a paper that earned an A or a time you helped a friend handle a tough personal situation. You might have felt good about yourself while rebuilding the engine of your car or when you made a new friend simply by taking the time to listen.

Maybe 1988 was the year you began to feel like an adult member of your parish or first took a leadership role in a school activity. Maybe over the past few months you have started to develop a clear idea of what you want for your career.

Take some time to appreciate what you already have done well. Reviewing your past successes can lead to even more accomplishments in the year ahead.

This New Year's, make a resolution to appreciate yourself more. When you do something good, take the time to pat yourself on the back. As you grow older, the ability to recognize your own accomplishments and feel good about them becomes ever more important.

There will be many times in your life when nobody else will know about the good things you do. It is important to learn to take pride in those achievements, even when not one other person knows they happened.

This next year spend a minute at bedtime thinking of at least one positive thing you did that day. Review the day's accomplishments, even if they're small.

Before you drift off to sleep, take a moment to remember something you did right. Then thank God for giving you the chance to do it.

## Speaking Out

By Jennifer Coval  
Nazareth Academy

When I think of Christmas, I often think of my brother returning home for the holidays three years ago. I remember hearing the car door slam and looking out the window, not being sure if that was really Eric. But there he was, walking up the ice-covered driveway in his naval uniform and crew cut, with packages in his arms. That may have been one of the happiest Christmases of my life. When you have

lived with someone all of your life, and he moves away, you are pretty happy when he's home again — especially for Christmas.

I believe that people are the real gifts at Christmastime. There is no price I could place on having my family with me. When I was a child, Christmas meant Santa Claus and presents, pretty packages and a Christmas tree. It meant those things then and now, but more than these, it meant people then, as it does now.

Christmas is a time to love. All the signs of Christmas — Santa Claus, the giving, the carols, the bright lights and the sharing — stem from that love.

Christmas is a time when people take a moment to smile on the ones they love — something we often forget to do at other times of the year. Most importantly, God smiled on the ones He loved 2,000 years ago.

"For God so loved the world that He sent His only son..." (John 3:16)

**CHARLIE'S**  
Coldwater Station  
RESTAURANT • LOUNGE • PARTIES  
607 Coldwater Road, Gates  
Between Buffalo Road & Westside Drive

Now Accepting  
New Years Eve  
Dinner  
Reservations

try our fabulous  
SUNDAY...  
Brunch..... 10:30 - 1:30  
Prime Rib Buffet..... 2:00 - 6:00

Lunches Mon-Fri: 11-2pm  
Dinner Mon-Thurs: 5-9pm • Fr-Sat: 5-10pm  
Sunday Brunch: 10:30am-1:30pm  
Prime Rib Buffet: 2-6pm  
Closed December 24th and 25th and New Year's Day

Reservations Appreciated **247-3860** All Major Credit Cards Accepted

\*\*\*\*\*  
**HOUSE OF GUITARS**  
Most New Album And Tape Releases Just \$5.98  
CD's From \$8.98 - \$11.98 Each

We received 28 correct entries identifying Chastity as the name of Sonny & Cher's daughter.

The winner was Brian Garofalo of Bishop Kearney

**MUSIC TRIVIA**

This week's question:  
Who had the 1982 hit "Love In the First Degree?"

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:**  
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.  
If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.  
All entries must be received within seven days of this papers issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal  
Music Trivia  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

## School choir to perform

The choir members from All Saints Academy have extended an open invitation to their Christmas concert at St. Mary's Church, 155 State St., Corning.

The Mass, which will take place at 7:15 p.m. on December 22, will be followed by a gourmet dessert fund-raiser in the gym. Deacon Ray Defendorf will make a special guest appearance.

**COMPUTERS & CARE**  
Division of Z.I.P., Inc.

PC.  
Service Center  
Computers  
Printers &  
PC. Rentals

Piano Works Mall  
586-8067