

Youth

Service project shows teen a painful world

By Rob Cullivan

ROCHESTER — Tanya Loiacano sits at the Andrew's Center's kitchen table, playing a board game called Candyland with four children. Their laughter fills the room as they push their playing pieces around the game's multicolored trail.

Laughter has been the exception, not the rule, in the lives of many of these children, who were placed by the state Department of Social Services in the center, operated by two sisters in the St. Andrew's Parish convent on Portland Avenue. Abuse, neglect or the inability of parents to provide adequate care are among the reasons the children — who range in age from less than a year to 10 — are placed at Andrew's Center for up to two years at a time.

Loiacano volunteers at the center every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. An eighth-grade student at Penfield's Bay Trail Middle School and a member of St. Thomas More Parish youth group, she learned of the center from her mother, a former teacher at St. Philip Neri School on nearby Clifford Avenue.

Loiacano's weekly routine began as a service project, required as part of her preparation to receive the sacrament of confirmation. Although she has completed the necessary 15 hours of service at the center, she has decided to stay on at least through the spring.

Her love for children motivates her work, which includes feeding the children, playing games and supervising their other activities. Loiacano's most important duty is taking time to let the children know they are loved. "Being around somebody to talk to is everything to a child," she said.

Yet talking to the children has not always come easily. Loiacano recalled her second Saturday at the center, when one of the girls was sad for no apparent reason. "I really wasn't used to this," she said. "She cried and cried. When I actually saw the tears, I just felt like crying myself."

The children at Andrew's Center opened Loiacano's eyes to a world she hadn't known before. "I've never seen anything like this," she said of the children's scared lives. "You think the kid really needs help, but it's the parents."

The center helps to provide some of the family life the children have lost — a fact that the eighth-grader said immediately impressed her. "It touched me how much (the children) pulled together. They spend day and night as a whole family," she said. "They treat each other like brother and sister."

Despite the warm family feelings, Loiacano's mother warned her not to become too attached to the children — a warning which the girl confessed she has ignored. Whether her attachment will lead her to continue volunteering after the spring is still an open question, but the center's co-director certainly hopes she does.

"She's done an excellent job," said Sister Kathleen Kolmer. "She's real good at adapting to the needs of each one (of the children)." Occasionally, Loiacano has also adapted her time schedule to the center's needs. "One Saturday, I needed her for the whole day, and she was here," Sister Kolmer said.

When working at the center, Loiacano finds that she doesn't want to spare herself. "When I finish here, it's like I have a good feeling," she said. "I feel that what I did here was worth it."



Linda Dow Hayes/Courier-Journal

Tanya Loiacano, an eighth-grader at Bay Trail Middle School in Penfield, plays with one of the six children who reside at Andrew's Center.

Bishop Kearney Should the U.S. government notify plane passengers of bomb threats?

As Teens See It

DANIEL STAUB, freshman:
I feel it is logistically impossible to announce every bomb threat on an airplane. There could be thousands of threats called in every day. If officials did announce that a plane had a bomb threat, what would prevent these terrorists from bombing another plane with no warning? Announcing a bomb threat does not take away the possibility of other planes being targeted by terrorists.

MEG DEALY, senior:
I don't think that it would be reasonable to expect the government to publish every bomb threat that they receive. This would cause a constant panic and great losses for the airlines.
I am not saying that what the government did, or neglected to do (in the Pan Am case), was right, but it was a decision that would have been difficult for anyone to make.

MAUREEN ZIMMERMAN, junior:
Yes, I believe people have the right to know if their lives are in danger. If the government officials would have warned the people about the threat (to Pan Am Flight 103, bombed Dec. 21 over Scotland), many lives might not have been taken.

Listening critically to songs of 'love'

By Michael Warren
NC News Service

Someone reading my title for this column is going to ask, "Why should anyone have to tell me how to listen to love songs? I have my own ears. I don't need instructions for listening to songs."

That is a good objection to the topic I am dealing with this week. In trying to answer it, I am going to ask a series of questions about popular love songs — including the ones you like and dislike. However, I am going to avoid mentioning specific songs. You will have to make connections to the specific songs you know.

1) Are there any songs that present a false idea of love?

One way to answer this question is to ask yourself what recent love song presents for you the most valid and true notion of love. Once you name the true approach to love you can see better the false or silly notion of love.

You might ask yourself, "Well, how do I know which notion of love is true and which is stupid?"

One way to find out is to ask if there is a notion of love that you would not want your best friend to be guided by because he or she could get messed up. That notion of love is probably a false one.

2) Are there any songs about "love" that you

Coming of Age

wouldn't want to hear your 9-year-old niece or nephew singing?

We all have our favorite children, and we care a lot about what happens to them. We don't want them to eat junk that might make them sick. We also don't want their minds poisoned by songs we know aren't good for them.

3) An important question to ask about love songs is: How do they depict men or women?

Some songs sung by women depict women as starved for sex and wanting some male to satisfy their lust. In my examination of these songs I have found that most of them, even when sung by women, are written by men.

I think it is dangerous to have a woman sing such a song because it displays a male's sex fantasy as if the fantasy were a woman's. What do you think? Would you agree that it gives a very wrong notion to men. If it does, then that's the kind of thinking that can lead to rape.

There have been more than a few "love" songs in the past few years that show men and women exploiting one another just for their own selfish pleasure. What do you think of them? What kind of message do you think they give to people who don't reflect on them?

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We received 20 correct entries identifying Debbie Harry as the lead singer for Blondie.

The winner was Ron Sauers of Rochester

MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:
Who recorded the following #1 song, "Time In A Bottle?"

A: _____

Name _____
Address _____
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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.
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