

Students clean barn to reap hope for hungry

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Dave Maltz and Christine Sibilio recently cleaned up one mess only to create another.

Hoping to create a "mess" of food for hungry people in Africa and the United States, Maltz, a senior at Brighton High School, and Sibilio, a freshman at Our Lady of Mercy, spent three hours cleaning a barn at the Just Neighbors Co-op Farm in Henrietta on Saturday, April 15. The farm is operated by Politics of Food, a program of the Peace & Justice Education Center of Rochester.

The two students, along with about 30 from St. John Fisher College, joined other college students throughout Monroe County to spend three hours Saturday cleaning up various sites in the city and country. Half of the money raised from donors who sponsored the students went to hunger-relief projects in Monroe County and the other half went to similar projects elsewhere in the United States and in Ethiopia.

The cleanup was part of a national effort coordinated by the National Student Campaign against Hunger, the largest network of student hunger activists in the United States, according to Jane Kirchner, a campus minister at Fisher who helped organize the event locally. The Fisher group raised \$1,100 out of a total of \$1,700 raised in Monroe County, she said.

Maltz and Sibilio learned of the cleanup through their youth group, which includes



Michael N. Aydogan

Students from St. John Fisher College and the St. Thomas More/Queen of Peace youth group spent three hours cleaning up the Just Neighbors Co-op Farm on Saturday, April 15.

high school students from Our Lady Queen of Peace and St. Thomas More parishes in Rochester. Neither student solicited sponsors for their work since this was the first time youth group members had participated, explained Mary Frances Spiez, the group's co-director.

"They just did the work," Spiez said. "It was more or less to introduce them to

the hunger cleanup."

Although they didn't raise any money, the students did raise their own awareness of ways to fight hunger. Maltz, a parishioner at Queen of Peace, also raised something else — his hair — when helping to throw sticks and brush into a bonfire. "I nearly got burned to death by the bonfire," he said. "I got a little too close and got a

tad singed."

Sibilio, a parishioner at St. Thomas More, had less dramatic memories of the day, but nonetheless enjoyed it thoroughly. She especially liked the Fisher students. "It was funny because I didn't feel out of place," she said. "Everyone was so friendly. I thought that people were really eager to help."

Eagerness to help the hungry is a hallmark of the Brighton/Pittsford youth group, which has donated time and effort in the past to feed the needy. During Advent and Lent, members collected donated food after Masses at both parishes. Some of the food went to refugee families in the area, and some went to the House of Mercy, a outreach center on Rochester's northeast side operated by the Sisters of Mercy.

Maltz predicts that more youth group members will turn out for next year's cleanup. "Most of us had a really good time ... It was kind of lighthearted," he said, noting that the day ended with a pizza party.

Sibilio added that the cleanup gave her a chance to experience what is often preached to her — "Jesus lives in all of us." Cleaning up the dusty barn and hauling out brush to be burned, she envisioned the planet's hungry people as they so often appear on our TV screens.

"I was out there because I wanted to help them," she said.

COMING OF AGE

By Linda Rome
NC News

I was 34 when I was confirmed in the Catholic Church. It was a happy moment. I was sure I was at the right place at the right time.

But it was unexpected and there are still times when I say, "I can't believe I turned out Catholic!" I took the commitment seriously, so seriously that only God's grace could have made it happen.

But when I tell my faith story, most people discount it. It's too long and too odd. And of course, it's a story that has no ending, just a middle.

You, too, are in the middle of your faith story.

When I was 16, I didn't know what I believed. I only knew what I didn't believe, and I didn't believe in God. I was lonelier than I realized because few people want to believe that teen-agers care deeply about the eternal mysteries.

I didn't have the vocabulary to talk about such things or the life experience to under-

Find your place in your journey of faith

stand them. I have learned one thing: Our yes to God has to be all our own. We can fool our parents, we can even fool ourselves, but we can't fool God.

Here are six questions you might use to start a discussion at home or in your youth group to help you see where you are in your faith story. In some cases, you might choose more than one answer to a question.

1. In my life I have experienced:

- a) a sense of anger with God for allowing so much suffering; b) a sense of God's presence and comfort in times of trouble; c) a sense that I don't really know God at all and don't know how to get to know God; d) a sense of being accepted and affirmed as a unique person in God's eyes.

2. I try to deepen my relationship with God by:

- a) avoiding drugs and alcohol; b) participating in faith-sharing discussions; c) reading the Bible; d) asking for God's help; e) having a thoughtful, reflective approach to life.

3. It is important to me that my church:

- a) has a definite system of doctrines and

beliefs; b) has a definite moral code with clear ideas of what is right and wrong; c) celebrates the sacraments; d) preserves and loves the Bible.

4. The Christian value I see being neglected the most in my experience is:

- a) the willingness to forgive and ask forgiveness; b) a respect for marriage and family; c) respect for people of all races and creeds; d) the willingness to care for the underprivileged.

Our Lady of Mercy High School

Was Pepsi right to drop Madonna?

GRETCHEN SEITZ, senior:

When you hire someone to promote your product, you should be well aware of their image in advance. If that image changes, that's the risk you take.

5. I think that a Christian:

- a) tries to live like Jesus did; b) considers people more important than things; c) tells the truth even if it hurts; d) regularly attends church.

6. My own inner faith experience can best be described as:

- a) a sense of God as my protector and guide; b) a lack of real interest in God; c) a sense of my own unworthiness in light of God's overwhelming love for me; d) a desire to grow closer to God.

AS TEENS SEE IT

ANNE DOYLE, senior:

I think Pepsi had every right to dismiss Madonna because her video and image are not appropriate for children who idolize her.

HOUSE OF GUITARS

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We received 13 correct entries identifying Dire Straits as the group that had the 1977 hit "Sultans of Swing!"

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MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:

What Pink Floyd album topped all in 1980?

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Rules:

Each week, the Catholic Courier, 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 Catholic Courier. 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 paper's issue date. winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

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