

Parish teens find league hits home

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — She joined youth group because she wanted to learn more about her religion.

He joined youth group because he wanted to expand his social life.

She catches for the youth-group softball team at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, St. Martin's Way.

He pitches for the youth group at St. John the Evangelist, 549 Humboldt St.

They faced each other in a diocesan youth group softball league game on Wednesday, July 12, at Holy Name. Her team won 13-4.

But defeat won't make Carl Fuehrer Jr. abandon his fledgling softball career. A freshman last semester at McQuaid Jesuit High School, Fuehrer has had too much fun to let one loss make him give up his weekly outings with the friends he's made in the last three years as a member of Holy Name's youth group.

Meanwhile, Ann Marie Born, who will be a senior next year at Greece Olympia High School, said that the 13-team league's games are the only chance she may have this summer to be with her youth group.

"I work two jobs," Born said. "I can only play on Wednesdays."

Born said that spiritual concerns, as opposed to athletic, motivated her to join youth group when she was in seventh grade. She attended several retreats and found in them support for her faith.

"I liked the groups we'd get in and the talks we'd get into," Born recalled of the past youth-group retreats. "I wouldn't mind getting into that type of situation again," she said, noting she wouldn't be as interested in the church without the encouragement youth group gave her over the last few years.

Raised in a devout family, Fuehrer said he has always had a strong faith, so his reasons for joining youth group were of a social nature.

"I was looking for people whose interests were not my interests," he commented, remarking that he enjoys music and plays guitar and harmonica. Ironically, many of his fellow members are musicians, he noted. "I'm getting them more into the stuff I like," he said, listing Pink Floyd, Metallica and the Blues Brothers as his favorite bands.

Born has met "a lot of good people" in youth group, and playing softball allows her to keep in touch with them. "I don't make the meetings. I work every single



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Carl Fuehrer Jr. pitches for St. John the Evangelist during the Wednesday, July 12, softball game against Holy Name of Jesus. The two teams met as part of their youth groups' summer softball league. Holy Name of Jesus came away the victor with a 13-4 win.

day," she said.

Part of what Born misses is talking regularly with Holy Name's youth minister, Ty Lambert. "Ty's a great guy ... He's just made it so much fun. He's just like a friend to everyone, not just a youth minister."

Born hopes to keep playing softball through the summer until she has time once again to get into the youth group's other activities. She may even be a teacher's aide for Holy Name's vacation Bible school later this summer, she said.

For Fuehrer, the softball league is a family affair. His father, Carl Sr., helps coach the St. John the Evangelist team. "My father pitched (in amateur leagues) for a long time," Fuehrer said. "It kind of helps me a lot because he gives me tips and secrets."

Sometimes, however, such fatherly advice is unwelcome, Fuehrer admitted. "He'll say something to me, and I might take it the wrong way," he said. Nonetheless, his father supports the student's enthusiasm for all the youth group's activities.

"He likes me getting out and meeting people," Fuehrer said.

Born said that her mother's past athletic experience nearly dissuaded her from becoming a catcher. "My mom got hit playing catch with my father," she said, recalling an incident from about eight years ago. "They were using a hard ball. It hit her

directly in the nose."

The injury gave Born pause, but she decided to take her chances behind the plate. "She was in quite a bit of agony," Born remembered. "But I didn't let it stop me."

EDITOR'S NOTE: For information on the youth-group softball league, call Anna Martin at 716/288-9321, or 482-6211.

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