

Cards raise funds, spirits during season

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

HENRIETTA — Jan Bansbach is feeling a little giddy these days, and it's not just the Christmas spirit that's infected her.

"I love this — this is the happiest time of the year," she remarked, as she walked through the halls of the School of the Holy Childhood, a non-denominational agency dedicated to educating mentally handicapped children and adults.

Bansbach has reason to feel extra special this year. She was one of seven Holy Childhood students whose designs were chosen to grace the school's Christmas cards, which are sold in several Rochester-area stores.

The student/artist was ecstatic when she learned last year that her drawing of a candle had been chosen as one of the Christmas card designs.

"I felt like a star," she said, adding "I did!" as her fellow students in Sister Marie Concepta's homeroom teased her. "People came up and congratulated me," she concluded.

Congratulations are in order for all Holy Childhood's students, since their artistic efforts have raised about \$2,000 for the not-for-profit agency since the card program was instituted in 1987, according to



"Snowman," by Dina Dowling

Helen D. daCruz, the school's development director.

Each year in the weeks before Christmas, Sister Concepta noted, the students begin drawing designs in a school-wide contest. Eventually, the designs are collected and circulated among the school's teachers, who designate their favorites, with "1" indicating the design each teacher likes best.

The four or five designs receiving the most "1s" then become next year's designs. The finished products are packaged in groups of 12 cards, each packet selling for \$5 each.

Gail Beimiller came up with the idea for making the cards when she worked at Holy



Babette G. Augustin-Staff photographer
Jan Bansbach's family was quite proud that her candle design was chosen to grace one of the cards in the School of the Holy Childhood's Christmas card set.

Childhood as development director, a position she left in 1988. "I just thought it would be a good idea," Beimiller recalled "It was something that the children designed, and their own art would be compelling for people to buy."

The students clearly understand the cards' importance for their school. "I love the money (the cards' sale) donates to my school," Bansbach commented.

Even more valuable is the feeling of ac-

complishment designing the cards gives the students, who cited various sources of inspiration for their work.

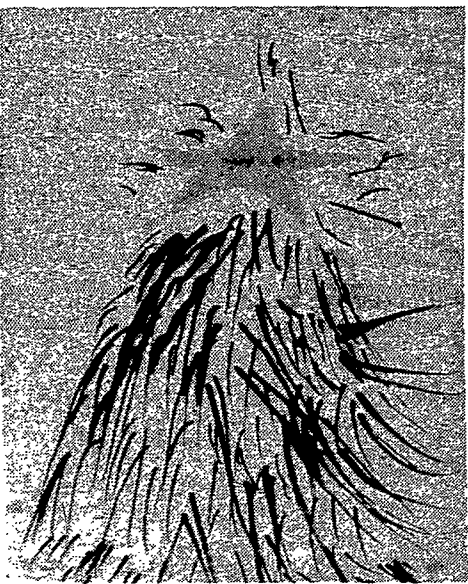
"My sister Debbie likes to look at a candle," Bansbach said. "It makes her think of the Lord."

Melanie Coon expressed her love for animals in her design of Santa Claus' sleigh pulled by two reindeer. "I love to draw," she said, adding, however, that she

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Shirley Palmateer works on a Christmas card design for this year's contest.



"Christmas Tree," by Shirley Palmateer

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