

'Eggsperiment' shows difficulty of parenting

By Sean McNamara
Freelance writer

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

For seniors at Our Lady of Mercy High School who take Sister Pat Beirsto's Christian Lifestyles Class, the egg must come first — at least for a week. Students spend a week caring for a hollow egg as if it was a child, dressing, bathing and caring for it 24 hours a day.

The so-called "eggsperiment" is "a fun way of simulating what it's like to be a parent," said Sister Beirsto, who offers the lifestyles class as one of two elective theology classes for Mercy seniors.

At least the project starts out fun. Students who took the course last semester admit it was a lot more enjoyable to observe their friends than to struggle with the responsibility themselves.

"By the middle of the week, I was sick of it (the egg). In the end, I just wanted to throw it out," said senior Melissa Galardi. "Every day it seemed like it was longer and longer."

The purpose of the experiment is to demonstrate the difficulty of taking responsibility for a child.

"It makes you realize how much you take for granted. (Teens) are self-oriented

right now. I don't have time to worry about someone else," explained senior Jessica LaManna.

That 24-hour-a-day responsibility gave Galardi a dual appreciation for her own parents and for teenage mothers. "It made me respect what my parents went through," she said. "It also showed me about the problems of teenage mothers. They have to give everything up for this kid. It's not like babysitting."

The egg could never be left alone, and students could only enlist babysitters for four hours per day. One "parent" described how she left her egg at home with her father while she went out with friends. She returned home to find that her dad had left the egg alone. "At first, I didn't think it was that big of a deal. Later, I realized what could have happened if it was a child," she said.

"It was scary, even though it was just an egg," senior Katie Monahan said of the responsibility. "It made me not want to have kids until I am much older."

The students, who each had their own egg to care for, were divided over whether a partner would have eased the burden. Some said they would have been reluctant to trust a partner, and saw the "child" as a source of conflict. Others said sharing the



Illustration by Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

responsibility would give them a degree of freedom which they lost when caring for their eggs.

This role-playing experiment is part of the class discussion of the lifestyle of parenting. Through guest speakers and classroom discussion, Sister Beirsto said, Christian Lifestyles covers several other types of lifestyles — among them vocations to religious life and single life.

"Some people think you're single because no one will have you, or that people go into the religious life because they have nothing else better to do," said senior Jen Granville. "Everybody is held to do what he or she is doing by God," Granville added.

"Each lifestyle is a calling," added senior Lynn Flannery.

Fisher dance raises funds to grant last wishes

ROCHESTER — St. John Fisher College students raised nearly \$50,000 during a 24-hour Dance for Love to benefit The Teddi Project, an organization that grants last wishes to seriously ill children.

Students earned \$39,000 in pledges and donations, while a simultaneous radiothon by local station WISH-95FM took in more

than \$10,000.

In addition to funding wishes for children, the money raised this year will help pay for a house the project hopes to buy in Orlando, Fla. — a popular destination among many children. The house will make it easier for wish organizers to make last-minute travel arrangements, according to Louis Buttino, Teddi Project organizer and a Fisher communications professor.

The Dance for Love at Fisher will make up about half of The Teddi Project's \$100,000 1990 budget.

Gary Mervis, who founded The Teddi Project in 1982 after his daughter, Teddi, died from a brain tumor, said that "a lot of kids are going to have their wishes come true" after this year's dance.

One of the highlights of the dance was a special appearance by rock musician Lou Gramm, who sang a moving duet of his song "I Want to Know What Love Is" with recent Fisher graduate John Stack.

Bad weather and Billy Joel's concert in Syracuse took their toll on the number of dancers present. With one hour left, Buttino said, the marathon was \$8,000 short of its goal. Between a "pass-the-basket" drive and spontaneous donations, the goal was reached in less than an hour. "At the end, it was like a miracle happened," Buttino said.

In its eight years, The Teddi Project has fulfilled the wishes of 163 children, most of whom are now dead.

Pictures of several of those children lined the walls of the Fisher gymnasium. At the close of the marathon, Buttino said he looked to those pictures and it was as if "they were smiling back from eternity."

— Sean McNamara

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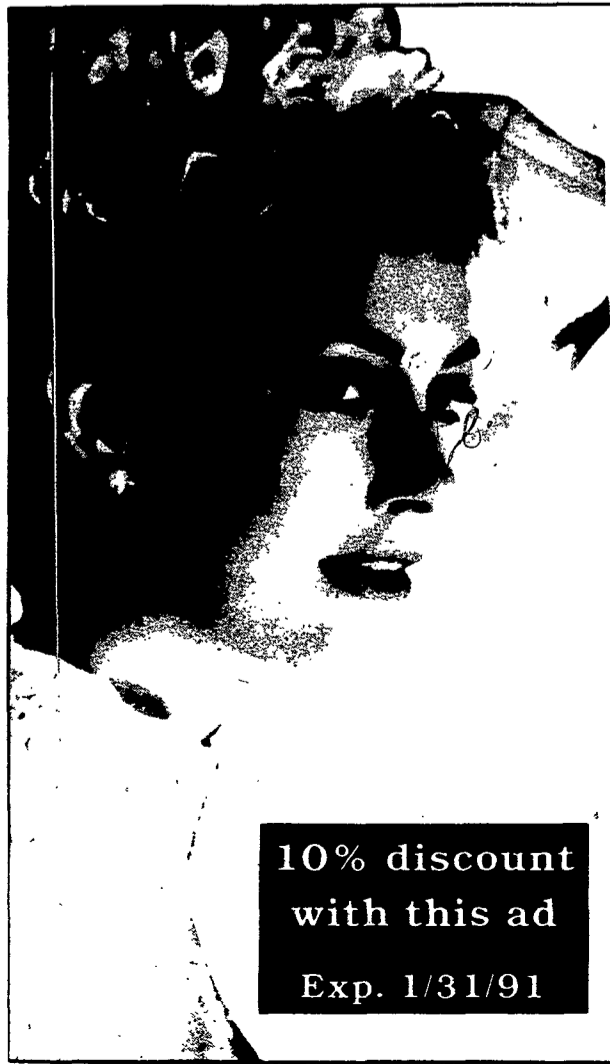
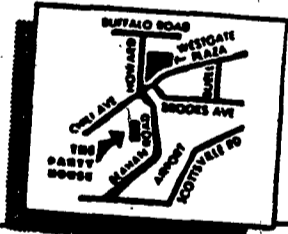
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