

GRADUATION '90:

T H E F U T U R E I S N O W

Young people, Pope John Paul II asserted, "are not the Church of the future; they are the Church of today. They, too, can be the hands of Christ for others."

The Rochester diocese's youth-recognition award derives its name from the *Manus Christi* — "Hands of Christ" — address the pope delivered to youths during his 1979 trip to the United States.

Since 1986, the diocese annually has presented the award to recognize teens who, through their faith and action, fulfill the pope's challenge. This year, 144 diocesan youths received the Hands of Christ award in honor of their service to their church and civic communities.

With the help of the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, the *Catholic Courier* has randomly selected a handful of Hands of Christ recipients to profile for this Graduation Section.

The four teens whose stories appear on this and successive pages exemplify the qualities for which they and their peers were honored. They have answered the Holy Father's call for all young people "to accept your responsibility in the church, the responsibility of your Catholic education: to help — by your words and, above all, by the example of your lives — to spread the Gospel."

Memory of friend inspires senior

By Sean McNamara
Freelance writer

HILTON — Some students at Hilton High School thought Roxanne Wilson should simply lay to rest the memory of her close friend, Jamie, who died recently in an alcohol-related car accident.

Although she understood her peers' feelings, Roxanne chose to team up with Jamie's relatives and other friends to form a foundation in his name to aid teenage substance abusers.

The senior summed up her response to fellow students by pointing out the value of remembering her late friend. "We were trying to keep the memory alive for other people in this situation," Roxanne remarked.

Jamie's situation had been marked by drug and alcohol abuse, Roxanne said, noting that the foundation's organizers want to help other teens cope with the dilemmas he faced.

The foundation now sponsors a "sober barn," where teens with substance-abuse problems can go for help. Last year, Roxanne helped organize a paper Christmas tree sale as a fundraiser. The sale raised \$2,000, most of which went to the Park Ridge Chemical Dependency Center. The center, in turn, provided the foundation with substance-abuse information to distribute to teens.

Roxanne, meanwhile, disseminates information of another kind each weekend as a lector at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Hamlin.

"I like getting up in front of people. I feel like I can make an impression on them," she said.

As a group-leader assistant this year, Roxanne also helped organize a parish confirmation retreat.

Working on the retreat "was a good learning experience. I learned a lot about other people," she said.

At school, Roxanne is involved in Future Business Leaders of America, a club that teaches students about the business world.

That experience will come in handy as Roxanne, who plans on a career in fashion, pursues the study of fashion buying and merchandising next fall at Monroe Community College. She currently works as a display assistant at a store in Hilton.

In her spare time, Roxanne enjoys cheerleading and dancing. She is also a lifeguard at the Hilton-Parma Recreation Center.



Roxanne Wilson stands before the site of a car crash that killed her friend, Jamie, and a passenger in the car Jamie was driving. Roxanne joined the families and friends of the two boys in turning the site into a memorial decorated with crosses, flowers and poems.

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Contains additional reporting by staff writer Rob Cullivan.

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