

Students choose mascot, dress-code colors

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Isaiah Reyes will never attend Northeastern Catholic Junior High, but it's possible some of its students will remember his name every time a sports team takes the field.

Reyes, a seventh-grader at St. Stanislaus School, came up with the name Crusaders for the new school's athletic teams as part of his work on the 28-member student advisory committee for the junior high school.

Committee members, under the direction of Sister Kathryn Wahl, RSM, the school's principal, were charged with advising her on the dress code and school mascot name, and with reporting back to their classmates on the junior high's academic, athletic and extracurricular programs.

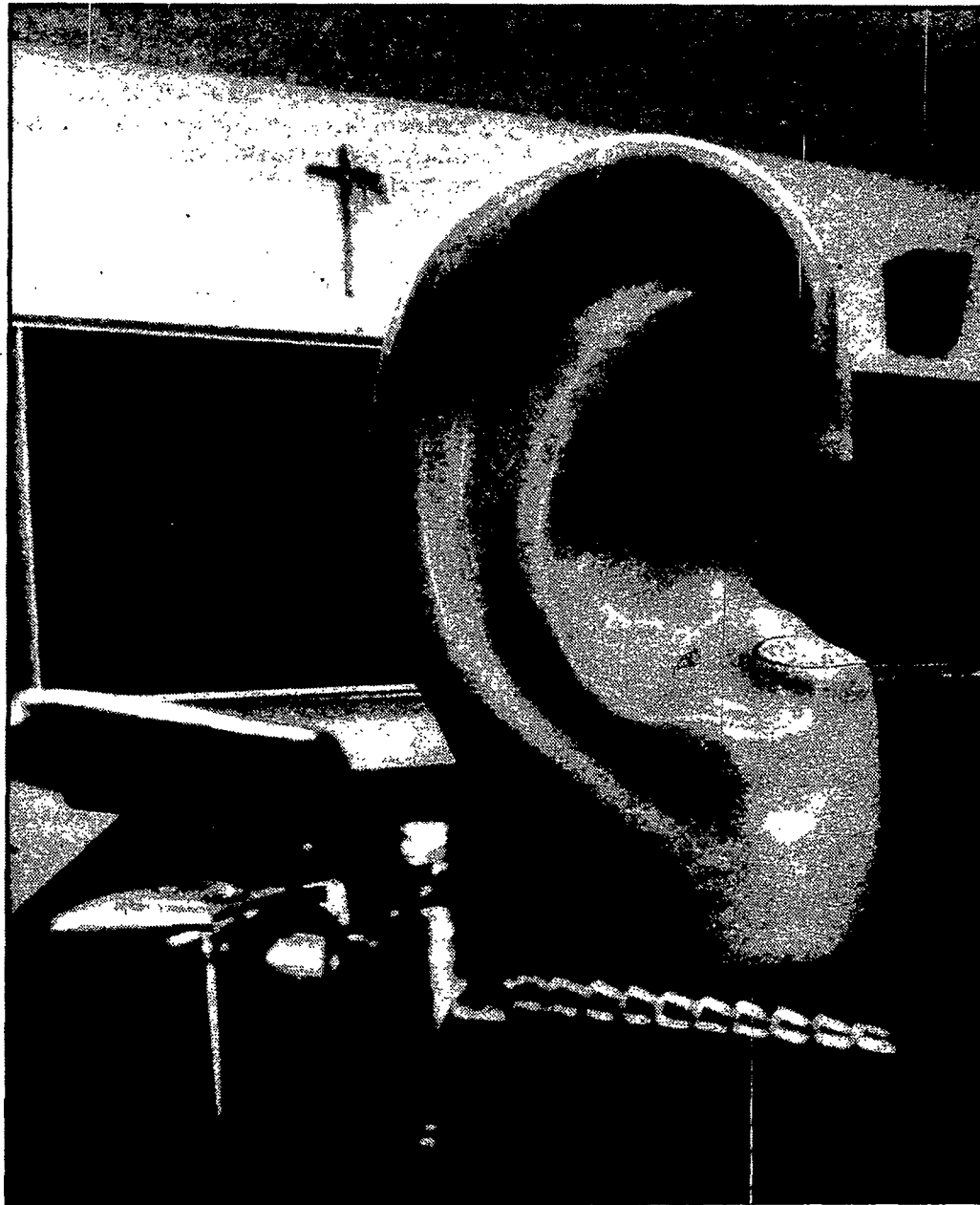
As of last week, several committee members said that the majority of them would vote to use Crusaders as opposed to the Hurricanes, the alternative.

Reyes said that the likelihood of his team name being chosen made him proud. "I know I chose something that other students would accept," he said.

Reyes and his colleagues, who come from nine Catholic schools in the northeast quadrant, have met four times over the last few months inside Northeastern Catholic Junior High. The new school is located in a wing of Bishop Kearney High School in Irondequoit. Northeastern will serve as a centralized junior high for the quadrant's Catholic schools, all of which will house kindergarten-to-sixth grades.

Reyes said he was initially going to attend Northeastern, but his parents decided to send him to McQuaid Jesuit's eighth-grade program instead. He noted that he had already attended four different schools, and that his parents — who are planning to enroll him at McQuaid Jesuit for high school — wanted to spare him from transferring again.

Although the St. Stanislaus student admitted that he was disappointed at first, he is now looking forward to attending the eighth-grade program at McQuaid. Still, Reyes noted that he'll miss his friends on



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
A model of an ear seems to overwhelm a biology lab in the new Northeastern Catholic Junior High.

the student advisory committee. "We got to know each other quickly, and these were all kids from separate schools," he said.

Mary Thomas, a sixth-grader at St. Margaret Mary School, credited Sister Wahl for bringing the students closer together. The junior high principal had students tell about their favorite hobbies or

rock groups in order to get to know each other better.

"Everything she brought up, she asked what we thought of it," Thomas observed, adding, "she knew everybody's names."

Sister Wahl took the students on a tour of the junior high, and moderated debate on the school dress code. The students eventually chose black skirts for girls, with red or white sweaters, and white button-down shirts and black slacks for boys.

Thomas confessed to not liking the dress code colors at first. "Everyone was saying black skirts, and I didn't like the idea of black skirts because I thought it was kind

of down in the dumps," she said.

Thomas added that she eventually reconsidered her point of view concerning the colors of the dress code.

"It's hard to pick out every day what you want to wear," she said, acknowledging the ease with which one can coordinate selections with black. She also pointed out that the dress code's uniformity will blur distinctions between rich and poor students.

According to Erica Bigdoski, a sixth-grader at St. James School in Irondequoit, committee members are already feeling more and more like Northeastern students and less attached to their current schools.

"(The committee) got down to the point and made you feel part of the school already," she said. "We're the ones who practically ran the (committee) meetings."

Such words must be music to Sister Wahl's ears. Northeastern's principal recalled that she came up with the idea for the student advisory committee after attending a conference last fall and learning of similar efforts by middle schools.

Referring to the anxiety that can accompany school reorganization, Sister Wahl said: "(The students) need to believe they have ownership of something ... If they believe they own (the school) they're going to work real hard to make it a success."

Other projects the committee will be working on include a possible summer picnic for junior high students and a promotional videotape for the school.

Despite the fact they're leaving behind their elementary schools, committee members seemed excited about attending the new junior high given the opportunities it will afford.

"I'll get to meet different people from other schools," said Brian Gibbs, a sixth-grader from St. Ambrose. "So, I'll get new friends and stuff."

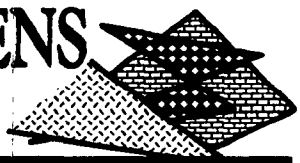
Sean Nicholas, a seventh-grader at St. Thomas the Apostle in Irondequoit, is looking forward to the school's large student population.

"It was nice being (in St. Ambrose) so you knew everyone so well," he said, "(but) I didn't like being in such a small class with 18 kids."

Notre Dame High School

Do you belong to some kind of youth group?

AS TEENS SEE IT



KRISTI HUFFMAN, senior

I feel very honored to be able to say that I am involved in a parish youth group. It makes me realize church is more than just a ritual, but is growing together as a community. It is a special place where we share acceptance of each other. The minute you walk in the door you feel the arms of friendship reaching out and welcoming you. It is this warm feeling that keeps you coming back. For two years, my parish youth group has been a major part of my life, and I have been touched in a way that cannot be put into words.



MARY VALEANT, junior

No, unfortunately times does not permit it. Being involved in many extracurricular activities takes up most of my time. When free time does roll around, school work takes precedence. The youth groups I am familiar with are quite active and I am afraid that if I committed myself I could not fulfill all of their activities and deeds. Also it was not until recently that I was contacted about belonging to one — maybe recruiting members should start at an earlier age.



TRACEY HAMILTON, senior

I guess the most obvious reason I go is the people I've become close to. I can honestly say that the friends I've made are genuine. They aren't constantly trying to impress everyone, and the masks that people hide behind in school can easily be taken off at youth group. Honesty is very important to me and I know that when I go to youth group I'll get the truth even if it hurts. The change in routine is nice too. I like to go because it's never the same old thing. I know I'll get something out of it and it won't be just another wasted evening. To me, I'm just sorry it took me so long to join.



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Correction
In the May 31 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, a student pictured with the story "Aquinas to launch literary publication" was misidentified. The student in the picture is Arianne Michalek. We regret the error.

HOUSE OF GUITARS

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We received no correct entries identifying *The Bee Gees* as the group previously known as the Rattlesnakes in England.

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What Four Tops hit started with the words *Sugar Pie, honey bun...*?

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