

Instructor makes learning fun for kids

By Richard A. Kiley
Managing Editor

LEICESTER — A year ago, Linda Treadwell had determined that she would pursue a career in interior design.

Now after having taught first-grade religious education for the past two years, the 17-year-old parishioner of St. Thomas Aquinas Church has changed gears and plans to study early-childhood education at the State University of New York College at Fredonia this fall.

"I love the little kids, they're great," said Treadwell, who graduated from York Central School in June. "They look up to me. It went a lot smoother than I thought it would."

In addition to thriving on work with children, Treadwell said she volunteered to teach religious education to "make it

fun for them to learn.

"I remember when I was in first grade and I didn't really like going to religious ed.," she said, adding "hopefully I made it interesting enough for them so they will want to learn more."

She also hoped to present a positive role model for the students. "I'm not into drugs, drinking and I go to church every week," she said.

Theresa Gall, religious-education coordinator at the parish, said Treadwell's yearning to serve the community is uncommon.

"Linda is a fine Christian young woman," Gall said. "She's there whenever you need her."

In addition to serving as a religious-education teacher, Treadwell works on the parish social ministry committee. As part

of her work with the group, she helps organize the annual Christmas Project by gathering food and toys for poor people in the Leicester area.

She also collects blankets and clothes for area migrant workers through the Thanksgiving Project, and helps at the church pantry.

"Linda is a champion of the poor and persons in need," Gall said.

Showing that her ability to influence children stretches beyond the primary grades, Treadwell also speaks to the parish's confirmation class.

"I try to get them to stay with the church after confirmation," she said.

A member of the year-book photo staff at York, Treadwell also had a role in the senior play. In addition, she is presi-

dent of Yorkers, a history society that also helps maintain a local cemetery.

When she finds the time to relax, Treadwell enjoys watching basketball or golf. She also paints landscapes in her spare time.

After she graduates from college, Treadwell, who was described as "a good-feeling person" by one of her first-grade students, said she hopes to start her own day-care center.

"It would give me more freedom to explore different methods of teaching kids," Treadwell said.

Contains additional reporting by Sean McNamara.



Linda Treadwell (center) enjoys working with her first-grade charges, including (from left) Heather Anzalone, Katie Gall (rear) and Michael Valentino.

Bobbette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

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