

'Giggle girls' bring cheer to St. Ann's

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — If it weren't for two Bishop Kearney students, 88-year-old Mildred Moldenhauer wouldn't know the lyrics to "Ice, Ice Baby."

But thanks to Kearney sophomores Renee Piccirillo and Michelle Olandese, Moldenhauer knows the words to the Vanilla Ice hit as well as the lyrics of several other pop songs. For Piccirillo and Olandese, sharing their favorite music with Moldenhauer is part of their weekly routine as volunteers at St. Ann's Home/The Heritage.

Although the two St. Cecilia's parishioners began working as St. Ann's volunteers as part of their confirmation preparation two years ago, they enjoyed their visits so much that they decided to continue after they were confirmed.

"We just wanted to keep on going because we liked the people we were working with," said 15-year-old Olandese.

For the past two years, Piccirillo and Olandese have been visiting the seventh-floor residents of St. Ann's for an hour every Friday afternoon.

Besides chatting with the senior citizens and letting them listen to their favorite music tapes, the girls assist with recreational activities. They help the elderly residents make crafts to decorate the lounge, help them bowl or fly kites, or accompany them on visits to such places as the Irondequoit Mall or one of Rochester's many festivals.

St. Ann's Recreation Assistant Judy Alba said the girls bring new life to what might otherwise be mundane activities for the residents.

"They are very rambunctious, but that's



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

Renee Piccirillo (left) and Michelle Olandese enjoy a special moment with St. Ann's Home resident Eva Earle (center). The two Bishop Kearney students have made volunteering at the home a routine for the past two years.

good. They are bubbly and the residents really need that," Alba remarked.

In fact, the duo has been dubbed "the giggle girls" because of their chronic laughter. According to Volunteer Recreation Coordinator Barbara Spry-Joyce, "they laugh continually."

Piccirillo agreed that she and her friend usually giggle as they tell people of their daily escapades.

"Me and Michelle laugh a lot, especially when we tell stories about our life and school," noted Piccirillo.

St. Ann's resident Eva Earle said she looks forward to the girls' visits because she likes seeing fresh young faces. It also helps break up the monotony, according to the 88-year-old resident.

"It gets me out of my match box," she joked in reference to her room at the home.

Over the years, the girls have established relationships with several of the seventh-floor residents. Even though the girls try to spend time talking with all the seniors during their visits, they agreed that they have grown especially fond of Moldenhauer.

The girls agreed that Moldenhauer's personality is what attracted them to her. "She is witty, almost rude, but funny," said Piccirillo.

Piccirillo said she and Olandese have established a routine with Moldenhauer that really "cracks them up." Each time they go to Moldenhauer's room to bring her to the lounge; they ask her, "Millie, where is your boyfriend?" and Moldenhauer replies, "He's hiding under my bed."

Olandese said one of her favorite times with Moldenhauer was when she and Piccirillo took the St. Ann's resident to Irondequoit Mall. The Kearney sophomore said Moldenhauer got a kick out of seeing posters of all the latest rock stars.

Likewise, Piccirillo said her favorite times are when she and Moldenhauer talk about boys. She recalled telling her elderly friend that she had a crush on a boy who worked in a music store. In reply, Piccirillo

received some humorous advice.

"When I asked Millie what to do, she told me to just grab him and start dancing with him in the store," Piccirillo recalled with a smile.

"When I told her I couldn't do that in the middle of the store, she told me to just put my arms around him and give him a big kiss."

In addition to their Friday visits, the girls often stop at St. Ann's on weekends or for special occasions. For instance, the two brought Moldenhauer candy for Easter and balloons for her birthday. They usually make a point of stopping in on other holidays, such as Mother's Day and Christmas, to bring a little sunshine to the home's residents.

Sometimes, however, other commitments — such as softball for Olandese and work for Piccirillo — prevent the duo from making regular visits. Alba noted that the St. Ann's residents miss the girls when they're absent. "I know I miss them when they're not here," she added.

Alba also said she appreciates the girls' suggestions and assistance. "There are more residents than we can help meet their needs," she said. "It's like the girls are spreading the word."

Piccirillo and Olandese both hope to continue their visits throughout their high school years.

Although the girls bring much joy to the residents of St. Ann's seventh floor, they also receive some valuable lessons from their elders. Moldenhauer, for instance, regularly reminds the duo of her motto.

"Be happy because you are only young once," she advises.

Mercy, McQuaid to present chilling play this weekend

ROCHESTER — The Mercy/McQuaid Players will perform *The Passion of Dracula* on May 17-18. Both performances will begin at 8 p.m. on the Mercy auditorium stage, 1437 Blossom Road.

An original musical based on the 1978 Broadway version that starred Frank Langella, the show's director is Bob Smyth, chairperson of the drama department at Mercy.

Tickets cost \$6 for adults and \$5 for students. Call 716/288-7120 for reserved seating. Tickets will be available at the door.

One-act play fest slated for DeSales High School

GENEVA — Students at DeSales High School, 90 Pulteney St., will present three one-act plays as part of a "Night of Insight" on May 17-18.

Students will present *Cry of the Crows*, a play showing the ill effects of gossip; *A Game*, which deals with human hostility; and *To Absent Friends*, which concerns drunk driving.

The performances will begin at 8 p.m. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for students.

The cast will also perform a special performance for the Taylor Brown Nursing Home in Waterloo on May 18.

For information, contact Pam Bryan, 315/539-2562, or the school, 315/789-5111.

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