



Kerry Monfalcone, a parishioner of St. Pius the Tenth and a senior at Gates-Chili High School, has earned the admiration of her teammates and coach on the school's varsity soccer team. Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

## Chili teen passes the credit

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

CHILI — Although he lamented the 1989 closing of Greece's Cardinal Mooney High School, Stephen Wilson has reaped its benefits.

"It certainly was unfortunate for a school of that quality to close but it certainly was an acquisition for us," observed Wilson, an alternative-education teacher and varsity soccer coach at Gates-Chili High School.

Asked whether that "acquisition" referred to all the former Mooney students who transferred to Gates-Chili, Wilson quickly replied, "No — Kerry!"

Kerry — Kerry Monfalcone, that is — is a valuable asset to Wilson, who has coached her on the school's soccer team to which he named her captain last year. And her value is seen not only on the playing field.

"It's her way with people," Wilson commented of the senior, a parishioner at St. Pius the Tenth Parish. "She's comfortable with people. She talks to people. She's sensitive. She's compassionate. She's caring."

Indeed, for Kerry, the essence of Christianity is nothing more than how people treat others.

"You can say religion is all in books, or all in God, but the religion in a person is the way they are with other persons," Kerry said.

Wilson noted that Kerry often cheers up many of teammates after they've blown a play, instead of spending her energy chastising them for missing an opportunity.

"You see that kids look up to her and ask what she says," he remarked.

Among those who look up to Kerry is her friend and teammate Lisa Dorini, a Gates-Chili sophomore. Lisa noted that Kerry extends her friendship to the soccer field.

"She was a good leader," Lisa remembers. "She wouldn't swear. She would encourage us. I used to pass bad sometimes to her and she'd say, 'Nice try.'"

Kerry said she learned a lot about the right way of treating people by observing the way her mother took care of her late aunt.

"Her aunt had cancer and she was in the hospital," Kerry noted of her mother, whom she described as a hard-working "career" woman. "She'd go straight from work to the hospital every night," Kerry added.

Kerry followed that example by teaching sixth-grade catechism at St. Pius the Tenth Parish, 3032 Chili Ave., where her mother had taught.

"I guess it's something I thought I could do with the kids ... for the church," Kerry says.

An aspiring graphic artist, Kerry has put her talents toward the service of others by designing a T-shirt for a non-alcoholic party the school put on following the senior prom this spring.

Planning to major in graphic design or advertising at the State University of New York College at Fredonia next fall, Kerry doesn't know whether she'll get the chance to use her artistic talents for other charitable pursuits, but she's sure she will remain strong in her Catholic faith.

"I think it's just part of my

personality," she asserted.

And the most important sacrament for her in that faith is marriage.

"I think it's just because I can see myself with some other person," she said of her future. "I can see myself wanting to have kids."

If she does, her soccer coach might argue they could have no better mother than Kerry Monfalcone. Citing an example from last fall, he said the teenager has shown signs of maturity and responsibility well beyond her years.

In October, Wilson was in the hospital with acute appendicitis at the same time he was scheduled to host a presentation at a Gates-Chili Sports Boosters' banquet. Not only did Kerry help put on the presentation at the banquet, but she also brought the whole soccer team to the hospital to visit the coach.

"She's appreciated by a lot of people and, a lot of the time, she doesn't allow people to let her know that," he concluded.

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