

Teen serves others out of love for God

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In Joseph F. Girzone's book *Joshua*, the title character offers his philosophy of Christian life when he says: "It is the function of the apostles and those who succeed them to guide the flock gently and to offer what Jesus taught ... Religion is most beautiful when a person lives an ordinary life but motivated by a great love of God."

For Brighton High School senior Suzanne George, this year's recipient of the Marie McCann Award sponsored by the Catholic Women's Club of Rochester, that same philosophy guides the way in which she tries to live her life.

George, who calls *Joshua* one of the most powerful books she has ever read, said she admires the way Joshua finds so much happiness with his simple lifestyle.

"He was so cool. He led a simple life, and never did anything wrong," George said. "People said terrible things about him, but he had everything he needed and was happy."

George said she was quite pleased and honored that the Catholic Women's Club acknowledged her volunteer efforts in the Rochester-area community.

According to a statement issued by Eunice Schillroth, chairwoman of the award committee, George was chosen for the annual honor "because of her giving of herself to her family, church, school and community in a loving, Christian way."

The Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner said she has been involved in volunteer work for as long as she can remember. George said she feels obligated to give back to society some of the good things she has been given in her lifetime.

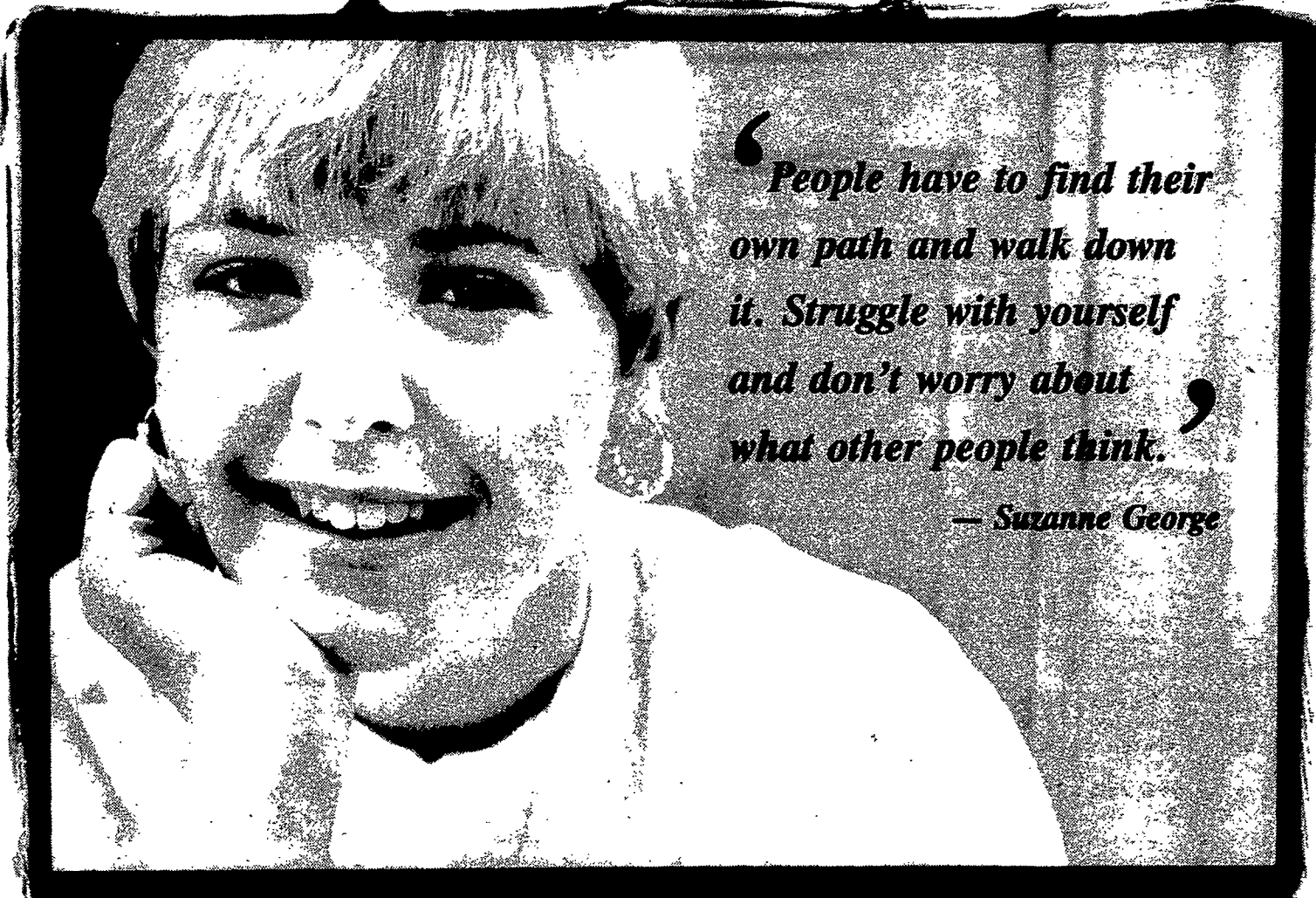
"There is so much poverty in the world and people out there who don't have all the things I have," George said. "I have always had food in the refrigerator, enough clothes and shoes and TVs all over the house."

One of the first volunteer efforts George recalled was running the gift shop at Monroe Community Hospital on weekends with her mother. She held the position from eighth- to 10th-grade.

This past year, George volunteered to teach fifth-grade religion class at Our Lady of Lourdes. She said she enjoyed the experience because she loves working with children.

"I have wanted to work with kids since I was 5-years-old," noted George, who plans to major in child social work at Wheelock College in Boston this fall.

The active youth said she wants to help



People have to find their own path and walk down it. Struggle with yourself and don't worry about what other people think.

— Suzanne George

Suzanne George, a Brighton High School senior and a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes, has been named this year's recipient of the Marie McCann Award sponsored by the Catholic Women's Club of Rochester. She was cited for her volunteer work throughout the Rochester-area.

Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

children because she knows many youngsters have difficult family problems.

"I hear about all the terrible things that happen to kids, and I had such a good childhood," George explained. "I want to get them out of the bad environments and into safer ones."

In addition to teaching parish youths, George also took part in planning her youth group's spring retreat at Camp Stella Maris. She has offered her office skills to help out her youth minister, Johan Engstrom, and serves as eucharistic minister at her parish.

At Brighton High School, George is an active member of Youth-to-Youth — a substance-abuse awareness group. Members of the group convey their anti-drug messages to other schools through two-day conferences. During her senior year, George chaired a committee in charge of coordinating volunteers for the program and organizing group sessions.

When she is not involved in one of her many group activities, George works at a stationary store during the week.

The 18-year-old said she gives her family top priority on weekends. Although she grew up as the second oldest of five children, George said she never had any problem living in such a big family.

George said she and her four siblings —

Peter, 19; Katie, 16; Mary, 14; and Christopher, 11 — are very close friends.

"When we split up, I usually go with my brother, Peter, because we are closest in age. But I share a room with my sisters and we talk about all the 'girl stuff,'" commented George.

The daughter of Damian and Joyce George, George said that her faith has developed throughout adolescence. Belonging to the parish youth group has brought her closer to God, she said.

"I became gung-ho when I joined the youth group. It just seemed to click," said George. "I remember seeing this senior boy who was so happy because of God. He just seemed to bubble. I thought, 'I want to be like that, too.'"

George noted that she feels lucky to have developed a sense of self-awareness before she reached high school.

"People have to find their own path and walk down it. Struggle with yourself and don't worry about what other people think," suggested George.

The Brighton student credited several people for helping her become so secure, but a few in particular have played a major role in her development.

George noted, for example, that her mother has always been there for her — especially during tough times. Likewise, her brother, Peter, has been a source of strength.

"He never fought my battles for me. Instead, he made me fight them for myself," said George.

She added, "I think it was the way I was brought up that had an impact on me helping people and going to church each week. It's a part of me; I get up and eat, brush my hair, and go out and help people."

Youths to gather in Buffalo for summit to fight hunger

The 1991 Western Hemisphere Youth Ending Hunger Summit is set for the University of Buffalo Aug. 9-11.

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