

Fairport grad chooses college over majors

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

FAIRPORT — When the Cincinnati Reds baseball team drafted Stu Downing last spring, the 18-year-old Fairport resident said it was nice to be recognized.

But not nice enough, however, to pass up furthering his education and accepting a basketball scholarship to a Division I college.

Downing recalled that he met Eddie Kolo — a scout for the Reds — while attending basketball camp at Monroe Community College last summer. Kolo kept in touch with Downing throughout the year and even entered him in this year's baseball draft despite the Fairport High School senior's reservations.

Downing said he was excited after the Reds drafted him in the late rounds, but he said deep down inside he knew he wanted to attend Siena College, near Albany, instead.

"I was excited, but I didn't make it more than it was because I wasn't going to sign," noted Downing, a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester.

Downing said his interest in sports goes all the way back to when he was about 3-years-old.

"My parents both participated in sports — maybe that has something to do with it," said Downing, who added that his parents, Dover and Charlotte, have always been very supportive of the athletic endeavors by both him and his younger brother,



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Stu Downing, a parishioner at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester, has accepted a scholarship to play basketball at Siena College this fall.

Keith. "When things were down they always gave the extra push."

Downing, who graduated last month, said he began playing sports competitively in basketball through the YMCA youth basketball program when he was 5-years-old and in baseball through Little League at age 7.

He continued to play basketball during the seventh- and eighth-grade as a point guard at Martha Brown Junior High School. During his freshman year at Fairport High School, Downing played on the

junior-varsity basketball squad. The next year he moved up to the varsity ranks to begin his three-year stint with the traditionally strong Red Raiders.

Fairport advanced to the Section 5 Class A semifinals each of Downing's three years on the varsity. The 6-2, 183-pound guard scored more than 1,000 points in his high school career, leading Downing in scoring his last two seasons. Downing averaged 20 points per game as a junior and 24.6 ppg his senior year.

Although the Fairport resident began

playing freshman baseball as an eighth-grader, he didn't play varsity baseball until his junior year. In addition to averaging .380 at the plate over his two varsity seasons, the shortstop/outfielder was only caught stealing twice on the base paths. He finished a remarkable 60 out of 62 in base thefts.

Downing will be playing fall baseball at Siena next semester, most likely tending center field. Then he will have one week to catch his breath before basketball season begins.

Jeff Fitch said Downing should have no problems succeeding at Siena. Fitch, who has known Downing for more than five years, said the student-athlete would enhance any college program.

"He is an even-tempered, very coachable athlete," remarked Fitch, who has been coaching the varsity basketball team at Fairport for 23 years. "He is a quiet leader — I wouldn't call him a rah-rah player, but he gets the job done."

Although Downing must have found the Reds' interest in him flattering, Fitch said the Fairport resident made the right decision to attend college. He noted that, as history shows, getting drafted out of high school is not as lucrative as many people might think.

"He made a good decision to go to college, and I think Siena is getting an outstanding person," said Fitch. "But it (the draft) gives an idea of the talent that he has."

Youths learn effects of labeling

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

LIVONIA — Teens attending this year's Catholic Youth Leadership Institute at Camp Stella Maris learned about the destructiveness of labeling people during a group-dynamics session on June 26.

The campers who volunteered during the activity were given a taste of the negative results of labeling people, leaving a sour taste in their mouths.

During the activity, three groups of eight youth volunteers gathered in circles among the other 23 campers who attended the CYLI program. Under the direction of Johan Engstrom, youth minister at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Brighton, and Ann Capone, youth coordinator at St. Christopher's Church in North Chili, peers placed headbands on the foreheads of the 24 volunteers. Each band had a role, such as "comedian," and an appropriate instruction, such as "laugh at me."

The other labels read: "expert — ask my advice;" "important person — defer to me;" "stupid — sneer at me;" "insignificant — ignore me;" "loser — pity me;" "boss — obey me;" and "helpless — support me."

As the demonstration began, each volunteer was oblivious to his or her own label but was aware of the labels of the others in the group. Each member of the group reacted to the others according to their labels.

One of the three groups picked up on the tone of the exercise at the very beginning of the lively discussion. It was soon obvious, according to group members, that even though they were unaware of their individual labels, they were being treated very differently.

For instance, Sarah Bertucci, a senior at Our Lady of Mercy High School, was labeled a "comedian." Every time she opened her mouth to make a suggestion, the group would break into roars of laughter. She appeared frustrated when her comments and suggestions weren't taken seriously.

Katy Delorme, a parishioner of Holy Name of Jesus Church, didn't seem frustrated about her role. In fact, she seemed to enjoy her role as the "expert" of the

group. Every suggestion she made was unanimously approved by the group.

Since Gavin Lindberg, a parishioner at St. Charles Borromeo Church, was labeled "insignificant," his peers simply ignored him. When the Greece Arcadia student finally left the circle because no one was paying attention to him, no one seemed to notice he left.

After 20 minutes of role-playing, the volunteers were asked to explain to the rest of the group what they had experienced.

Since she was told for the duration of the exercise that she didn't know anything and had nothing to offer, Our Lady of Mercy student Julie Camardo figured correctly that her label must have stated "stupid."

Likewise, Dave O'Connor, a student at Livonia High School, correctly assumed that his label had something to do with helplessness. Based on the remarks of his fellow group members, O'Connor said he got the feeling something was wrong with him.

"They gave me a help phone number and told me to go to my guidance counselor every day," O'Connor explained to his fellow campers.

Although the groups were going to discuss summer plans for their parish youth groups during the activity, the volunteers concluded that they were so busy worrying about their roles that they didn't get anything accomplished. They also agreed that they began assuming their roles because it was too frustrating to fight them.

Capone pointed out the fact that although these groups were "made up groups," many people assume similar roles in their daily lives.

Bertucci echoed Capone's contention that people often make incorrect assumptions about a person's character because of labeling. She noted that sometimes those assumptions can cause hurt and confusion for the labeled person.

"The way people perceive you has a lot to do with how you see yourself," said Bertucci. "Just because I have blonde hair, I always get the dumb blonde jokes. If you hear it enough, you start thinking it might be true."

Bishop Kearney junior Chris Regan said he thought the exercise was effective be-

cause the various roles were easier to understand once they were isolated.

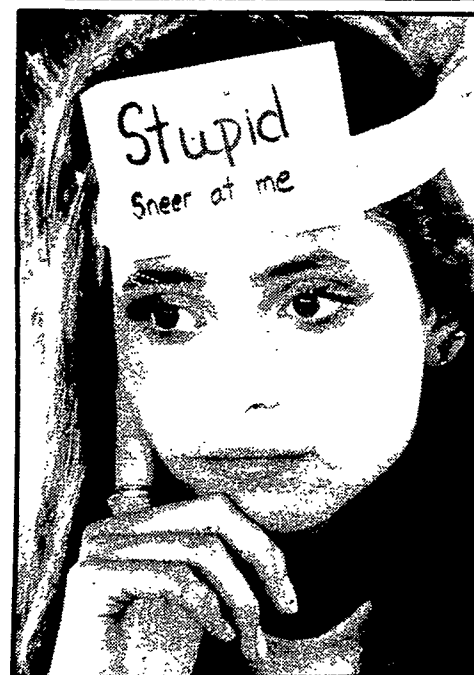
"A lot of people take on all those roles, but when you separate them you can learn something about that role," noted Regan.

Another camper, Ann Keenan, said the session on group dynamics helped her to see the importance of treating people fairly based on what she thinks of them — not on what other people say.

"It taught me how to treat other people and not take for granted what other people say they are," remarked the Greece Olympia High School junior.

For Cara Emerson, the session offered a powerful lesson she plans to convey to her parish youth group.

"It was strange how you could see the personalities they were role playing in our own youth group," said the St. Christopher's parishioner. "In our church it would be beneficial to do a meeting like this in the youth group — it would be good for the popular people to be treated like 'losers' so they can see how they treat others."



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Dena Cook, a parishioner at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, was 'labeled' by her fellow campers during the Catholic Youth Leadership Institute at Camp Stella Maris June 26.

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