

Student seeks career as nurse to aid others

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

FAIRPORT — People always ask Terry Lynn Horrocks why she wants to become a nurse.

The Fairport resident says the answer is easy.

"The only thing that I can think of is that when I was little I used to go to the hospital to see my grandfather and think 'I want to be here someday,'" recalled the 18-year-old Horrocks.

Horrocks noted that, when she was younger, she often visited Rochester General Hospital where her grandfather, Steven Miller, worked developing X-rays. Her grandfather inspired her not just because he worked in the medical field, but because he performed his duties despite his blindness.

In fact, both Horrocks' grandfather and grandmother, Diana, have been blind since childhood. After meeting at the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia, the couple married and had one child — Horrocks' mother, Lynda.

Horrocks said her grandparents have always been very independent. Before retiring, they both held full-time jobs. The couple has always cooked, cleaned and gardened for themselves.

Although her grandparents' blindness did not affect the loving relationship they had with her family, Horrocks admitted that it was unusual to grow up knowing that her grandparents could not see her.

"It's always in the back of your head, 'What if grandma can see me stealing a cookie from the cookie jar?'" Horrocks said with a smile.

She added more seriously, "It hasn't really bothered me at all. I've always been accepted to it."

The 1991 graduate of Fairport High School said she often helps her grandparents with their shopping or banking. Horrocks said she gets a good feeling from making their lives a little easier.

In addition to growing up in an environment that taught her to deal positively with handicaps, Horrocks said she chose to enter nursing because she has a penchant for helping others.

"It was my junior year and I was walking toward the nurse's office when I really started to consider nursing," recalled Horrocks, a parishioner of Church of the Resurrection in Fairport.

Horrocks, who will attend the State University of New York at Binghamton this fall, plans to pursue a career in obstetrics.

"Instead of seeing everybody dying, you see everybody being born," explained Horrocks.

Horrocks added that she would not consider working in geriatrics because she would "rather be where it is new and al-

ways something different."

Although she wouldn't prefer working with the elderly, Horrocks noted that she wouldn't mind working with patients with acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

"It wouldn't be difficult in the sense of how I feel uncomfortable around them, it would just be hard to see them going through the whole process," said Horrocks about working with AIDS patients.

She added, however, that as a health-care professional, she would have to deal with her patients without becoming emotionally involved.

"Doctors and nurses have said that after a while you have to get on with it. You have to be on the tip of your toes all the time and go on to the next patient," said Horrocks. "You can't let one person drag you behind; you can't get emotionally attached to them."

As a young person preparing to become a nurse, Horrocks said she has strong views on several issues currently facing the health-care profession.

"Health care in general is very expensive. I think Medicare and Social Security should be raised so that people can live off of that more," said Horrocks.

In an effort to reduce medical costs for the poor, Horrocks said she plans to volunteer at health clinics whenever possible.

"I'd feel better doing volunteer work that way because you know you can help people and they're too poor to afford it," said Horrocks. "If it's only a matter of a couple of dollars that they can't get a shot and they are going to get this awful disease, then it is worth it."

The young woman also holds some strong opinions about another highly debated health-care issue: euthanasia.

"It is hard to say what to do," said Horrocks. "I could see both sides of the issue. It's wrong on my part to let them go, but it's up to them what they want — if they want to live or die."

Horrocks said she has learned that no matter how hopeless a situation may seem, miracles can happen.

Her aunt, Evelyn Covill, who has battled with cancer for 30 years, helped her reach that realization, Horrocks said.

"She hasn't given up. She's gone through hell and she is still going at it," said Horrocks. "She has inspired me not to give up in those situations."

Horrocks' faith has also inspired her future plans, she said. Horrocks volunteered for service projects during confirmation preparation, helping her realize that she wanted to devote her life to serving people. Horrocks also said she knows that God will lead her in the right direction.

"It's not that I feel like I have to help people, I just enjoy doing it," Horrocks said.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Terry Lynn Horrocks, who will attend the State University of New York at Binghamton this fall, plans to pursue a career in obstetrics. The Fairport High School graduate said she has a penchant for helping others.

Denver archbishop condemns 'growing euthanasia mentality'

AURORA, Colo. (CNS) — Condemning a "growing euthanasia mentality" in Colorado and throughout the country, Archbishop J. Francis Stafford of Denver recently called on Catholics to resist moves toward physician-assisted suicide and withdrawal of food and water from patients who are not terminally ill.

"This mentality and the actions which flow from it constitute a threat to the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person which church teaching has consistently rejected," he said in a June 3 talk to the annual meeting of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, held in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

Archbishop Stafford said a 1988 survey of Colorado physicians by the Center for Health Ethics and Policy at the University of Colorado showed that 59 percent of the respondents would have been willing to administer lethal drugs to one or more of their past patients if such physician-assisted suicide had been legal.

The archbishop said none of the four major health-care bills proposed during the last session of the Colorado Legislature had adequately addressed issues of the "clinical diagnosis of terminal illness" or the "strong presumption in favor" of continued hydration and nutrition for patients.

"During the 1991 session, it is clear that

the strong insistence of the church that advance directives provide adequate safeguards for protection of human life was successful in gaining the respectful attention, if not the total agreement, of our state legislators," the archbishop said.

"I can promise you that the church will once again be present during the 1992 session to solicit their support against legislation which fails to adequately safeguard the human rights of the handicapped and seriously ill," he added.

Describing euthanasia or mercy killing as "an intentional assault on the human person whom God has united to himself in Christ," Archbishop Stafford distinguished it from "the withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment from persons who because of their condition will derive no benefit from its administration."

The church permits termination of "extraordinary" treatment, he said, but "for the patient to request a lethal injection to end life, or for the caregivers to administer a drug overdose with the intention of directly causing death is to destroy a life which God has made in his likeness and claimed in Christ."

On the issue of withdrawing food and water, Archbishop Stafford said the Colorado proposals failed to make "the crucial distinction between providing medical treatment and providing nutrition and hydration."

He said it is justified to withdraw food and water "when a patient is unable to assimilate the nourishment, or when the means necessary to administer nutrition and hydration themselves impose excessive burdens."

"Claims of 'excessive burden' should, however, be judged with great caution and always centered solely on the patient," the prelate added.

The Colorado bills also failed to distinguish terminally ill patients from those not in immediate danger of death, Archbishop Stafford said.

"Withholding medical treatment from those who do not suffer from a proximately terminal condition, and who could therefore derive benefit from it, does not differ morally from direct action to cause death," he said.

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