

Student leaders plan agenda for school year

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — It's early in the school year, but class leaders at Rochester-area Catholic high schools have already targeted certain areas they'd like to improve upon.

Many students agreed that increasing school spirit is one of their primary concerns.

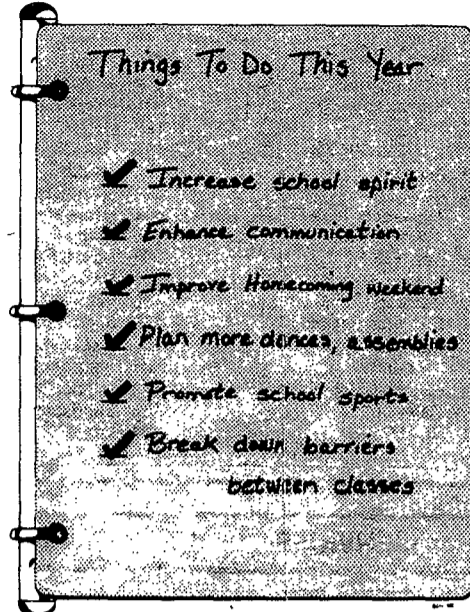
"First and foremost we want to build school spirit and involvement," said Mario Falone, president of the Executive Student Council at the Aquinas Institute.

Along with the council's three other members, Falone said he hopes to bolster school spirit through such events as the magazine drive, athletic games and Homecoming weekend.

Sean Norton, president of the Executive Council of Student Government at McQuaid Jesuit High School, said he would like to rekindle the school spirit that has dwindled over the past few years.

Norton cited the start of a T-shirt campaign to raise students' interest in sporting events and other activities. Thus far, sales of football and soccer shirts have been extremely brisk, he said.

Although McQuaid does not have the traditional Homecoming weekend, Norton said students hope to establish an annual celebration that would draw alumni back to the school. More dances and the recently reinstated pep squad should also help raise



school spirit, Norton said.

Over at Bishop Kearney, Student Council Vice President Christina Vito is encouraging students to attend more sports games, pep rallies and dances as a way of showing school support. She added, however, that students need to feel at home in their schools for spirit to flourish.

"School spirit comes from the school being clean and presentable," noted Vito, who said the freshly painted lockers give the school a new look this year.

In addition, Kearney senior Gracen Porreca, president of the Student Council, said the school will become more spirited if

communication between students and administrators improves.

In an effort to enhance communication, the council eliminated the position of treasurer and instituted a director of public relations.

"That person will be the main 'go-between' between the faculty and the Student Council," said Porreca.

Vito added, "We hope students will feel comfortable coming to us so we can bring their ideas to the principal."

Channel One, the Whittle Broadcast Network, will also be used as a communication tool, according to Porreca. Sporting events and other highlights will be broadcast daily to keep all students up-to-date with Kearney's teams, he said.

In addition to planning regular events such as dances, "Spirit Week" and Homecoming, student leaders are also helping to start a recycling program at the school, said Porreca.

When asked what they would do if they "ruled" the schools, student leaders offered several interesting ideas.

For instance, Sue Merklinger, secretary of the Executive Student Council at Aquinas, said that the AQ council would schedule more assemblies and put more money into the school's athletic programs.

A lighted athletic field for night football and soccer games would top the students' list, said Merklinger. In addition to allowing the school to host athletic contests in the evening, a lighted field would enable the Little Irish marching to host field shows, she said.

And if the students could do anything

they wanted, Merklinger said they would shorten the school day by eliminating study halls and lunch periods.

"We would just go in and get done what we had to do," she said.

Vito agreed with Merklinger that more money should go to sports programs — especially the junior varsity teams — but she said the time spent in school should stay the same. She would, however, alter the school dress code to include pants and walking shorts for Kearney girls.

Both Porreca and Vito thought that additional courses — such as industrial arts, mechanics and home economics — would benefit students. They could learn about various career opportunities through those types of electives, Vito explained.

Norton and Vice President Matt Shields said most people might think they would allow girls to enroll at McQuaid if they were in charge. But they both said they prefer going to an all-boys school.

Overall, student leaders seem to think that they can make a difference in their schools this year with the resources and authority they have been given.

"We want to get through the year and help anyone with any problems, making things easier for students and the administration," commented Porreca.

And even though school's been in session for less than a month, some students have already noticed the fruits of their labor.

"If you ask any student if the school has more spirit, they would definitely say 'yes,'" noted AQ's Falone. "Things are definitely working this year."

Polish group sponsoring essay contest for youths

ROCHESTER — The Polonia Civic Centre of Rochester is sponsoring an essay contest for students entitled "What My Polish Heritage Means to Me."

The contest is open to elementary, junior and senior high school students who have at least one Polish parent. October is "Polish Heritage Month."

Prizes will be awarded for each level: \$75 for senior high; \$50 for junior high; and \$25 for elementary-school students.

The original essays should be 250 words or less. Winners will be announced on Oct. 13 at the Pulaski Day celebration at the General Pulaski Library, corner of Hudson Avenue and Norton Street.

Entries, which must be postmarked no later than midnight on Oct. 5, 1991, should be mailed to: Polonia Civic Centre, Inc., 127 Filon Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14622.

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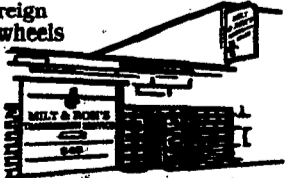


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