

Students traveled long road to BK

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Students travel from many parts of Monroe County to attend Bishop Kearney High School, but it's doubtful that any have journeyed as far as two young men currently at BK.

Ovidio Regos, a junior from Romania, and Marek Bertman, a senior from Poland, have given the school an international flavor this year. The two students landed at Kearney under different circumstances.

Regos' parents moved here a year ahead of him and the family is planning on staying in Rochester permanently, whereas Bertman is on a one-year exchange program and is much more likely to return to his native country.

Regos, known as "Ovi" to his classmates, had hoped to arrive in the United States sooner but had trouble

obtaining his visa. His father, Nicholas, and mother, Anna, moved here last year. Nicholas is an ordained priest in the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic Church, and, according to Ovidio, is currently serving at the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Epiphany in Rochester.

Ovidio is gradually improving his English vocabulary, although he admits, "It's hard for me, the English."

As far as his initial impressions of the United States, he said, "I like America because the standard of living is higher. And the schools are better because you can choose the subjects that you're interested in."

Living conditions in his native country are especially harsh, according to Ovidio. Most of Romania's citizenry experienced great hardship prior to the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu in late 1989. The dictator was later executed.

"I don't want to go back," said Ovidio.

Despite enrolling at Bishop Kearney only one week after arriving in Rochester, Ovidio has quickly adapted to life at the Catholic high school.

"The kids find him fascinating — not only as a person, but also because of where he comes from," said Colleen Sullivan, Kearney's director of institutional advancement.

Marek Bertman's love of sports has been easily recognizable in his brief stay at Kearney. In addition to playing football during the fall, he is currently a member of the boys' basketball varsity.

Like Ovidio, Marek sees freedom of choice as being the biggest difference between Kearney and his high school back home.

"The school system here is a lot different than in Poland. I like school here more because you can select your subjects," he said.

Marek came to Kearney through the Association for Teenage Diplomats Program. He traveled to Rochester with Tomek Klimek, a friend from his home city of Krakau. Klimek is an exchange student at Churchville-Chili High School this year.

One noticeable difference between Marek and Ovidio is that Marek came to this country with a better command of the English language. "I've been learning English for four years in high school and have also taken private lessons," he said.

Overall, he says, his American adventure "was kind of confusing at first, but now I'd say that I like it and it's going to be a good experience."



Marek Bertman from Poland is a senior at BK. He likes his new school because 'you can select your subjects.'



Ovidio Regos, a junior at Bishop Kearney High School, came to Rochester from Romania during the fall.

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