

Program to focus on gifted

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HENRIETTA — An area organization will host a fall conference here concerning how education officials can better meet gifted students' needs.

The statewide teachers' organization known as Advocacy for Gifted and Talented Education has scheduled its 16th annual conference, titled "Celebrating Excellence Together," on Oct. 23-24. The program will take place at the Radisson Inn, 175 Jefferson Road, and the Rochester Institute of Technology.

According to Rita Mueller, public relations coordinator for the Rochester-area AGATE group, about 200 adults are expected to attend the two-day program of lectures and workshops.

Ten instructors have been planning this conference over the last few months. Their goal, according to AGATE member Sheila Root, is "to bring new information to teachers to get them involved; to get them some help teaching gifted children. And it's not just for teachers, but also for parents. We want to let them know that there are books (related to gifted children) available.

"More people have to realize that we have gifted and talented students, and to celebrate having them," remarked Root, a biology professor at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave., Pittsford.

Scheduled guest speakers for the conference are the University of Arizona's Dr. Barbara Kerr, whose theme will be "Smart Girls, Gifted Women;" Dr. Daniel Singal from Hobart and William



Steven Olufsen (right) and Rob Everhart, both recent graduates of Holy Cross School, will present this fiber-optics project at AGATE's state conference in October. The project was constructed in Olufsen's basement.

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Smith Colleges, who will address ways to achieve excellence in school; and Dr. James Webb from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, who will lecture on gifted children's emotional needs.

The conference will also include a series of workshops and group activities for children. Among the 200 youths expected to participate, 25 will make project presentations.

Two of those children, Rob Everhart and Steven Olufsen, are recent graduates of Holy Cross School, 4488 Lake Ave., Rochester. Together they worked on a fiber-optic project that won first place at the Holy Cross science

fair this past spring.

"(At the conference) we're going to explain about the project and try to get the audience involved as much as possible," said the 13-year-old Everhart, who will attend Bishop Kearney High School this fall. He is enrolled in an accelerated learning program and has received two scholarships.

Everhart and Olufsen — who will attend McQuaid Jesuit High School — did their project research at the Rochester Public Library's Rundel branch, and constructed the project in Olufsen's basement in one month.

The combination of water, mirrors, and a flashlight "shows how

light can travel through fiber optics," Everhart noted.

Everhart welcomes the opportunity to mingle with other academically advanced children at the AGATE conference. "I'm going to compare what they do to how I do it; check out how they work," he said.

His mother, Maggie, is also eager to attend the October event.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the kind of creative opportunities that will be available for him," she remarked.

EDITORS' NOTE: For conference details, call Claire Eiselen at 716/442-1500, ext. 237, or Priscilla Bowman at 396-3138.

Sister Burns attends principals' academy in Washington, D.C.

ROCHESTER — Sister Lorraine Burns, SSND, principal of Holy Family School, 899 Jay St., attended the 1992 National Catholic Principals Academy in Washington, D.C., last month.

The meeting's participants discussed such topics as public policy, legislation, state and national political action; technology; ethnicity in curriculum and in the community; as well as financial planning and organization.

The academy is sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association, which represents 200,000 educators. Funding for the academy is provided by the Father Michael J. McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education.

According to a press release provided by Holy Family School, the academy recognizes "exceptional Catholic school principals" in order to "build a national support network of principals committed to leadership in Catholic education."

A candidate for the academy must serve as an active principal for at least three years; demonstrate leadership in Catholic education; hold at least a master's degree; and be a member of NCEA. In addition to their application, candidates must forward reference letters from the superintendent of their diocesan schools as well as other community leaders and school parents.

"In sponsoring the National Catholic Principals Academy, NCEA recognizes the key role that the principal plays in fostering excellence in education," said Sister Regina Haney, OSF, NCEA's director of the program.

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