

Service unites new students at 2 colleges

Projects stress aiding community

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Freshman college orientation isn't necessarily something that's limited to on-campus events.

Through a series of volunteer activities conducted over the past week, first-year students at both Nazareth and St. John Fisher colleges made quick friendships with their fellow students — as well as the community at large.

Approximately 230 young adults at Nazareth came together for the college's first-ever "Saturday of Service," held Saturday, Aug. 29. The students, mostly freshmen and transfers, performed duties such as cleaning and refurbishing buildings. In addition, they visited residents at nursing and group homes as well as migrant-worker camps.

Sister Kathy Weider, SSJ, Nazareth's director of campus ministry, said the idea for the event evolved from an undergraduate survey taken in 1990.

"Eighty-three percent of those students were involved in community service off-campus. So we're trying to pass that same spirit on to new students," Sister Weider remarked. "We want to give them a clear message about how important community service is at Nazareth."

Although participation in "Saturday of Service" wasn't mandatory, it was strongly encouraged, according to Nazareth senior Jennifer Choate, an orientation committee member.

"Our basic goal was that if they haven't done community service before, they should experience it in college so they have a taste of what it's all about," said the 21-year-old Choate, whose group of 50 students spent the day at St. John's Home, 150 Highland Ave. "At first the freshmen were a little intimidated, but we said, 'This is going to be fun.' And everybody had a great time."

Kit Pollicove, director of public relations at St. John's Home, noted that a



Nazareth College junior Pam Davis (right) shares a conversation with St. John's Home resident Ruth Flood during the college's first-ever 'Saturday of Service' Aug. 29. Approximately 230 students volunteered their services in the community, cleaning and refurbishing buildings as well as visiting nursing homes and migrant-worker camps.

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

dance among the senior citizen residents that afternoon was a big success.

"With so many friendly faces and escorts, and the college students' enthusiasm, even the shy (residents) enjoyed themselves," said Pollicove. "When we did the 'Chicken Dance' and the 'Hokey Pokey,' that seemed to break the ice."

After they completed their community service, Nazareth students were invited to a Rochester Red Wings baseball game or an outing at Seabreeze Amusement Park.

Choate pointed out that the day served as a positive way for freshmen to break down barriers between each other.

"After it was over we had a reflection session. They kind of talked about what they liked and didn't like, and got to know each other better that way," said Choate.

"It sort of threw them together where they were working with each other in a relaxed sense — not like it

was a class project," observed Sister Weider. "They formed a different kind of bond."

"Actually, I made quite a few friends," said Megan Neal, an 18-year-old freshman.

Neal took part in the dance at St. John's Home, while her roommate, Julie Wightman, helped clean rooms at School No. 29, located at 88 Kirkland Road.

"It was pretty hard work. We worked for quite awhile," remarked Wightman, 17. "When you work side-by-side like that, you really get to know people."

Community members received positive long-term effects of a different kind, noted Sister Weider. "The agencies were delighted with the amount of work that got done. At School No. 4 (located at 198 Bronson Ave.), the students painted an entire cafeteria, a classroom and some lavatories."

A similar effort took place, on a smaller scale, at St. John Fisher College. Approximately 20 first-year students came together for the college's annual freshman volunteer day, held Monday, Aug. 31.

The group visited Bethany House of Hospitality, 169 St. Bridget's Drive, and Francis Hospitality Center, 547 Joseph Ave. Bethany House serves battered women and children, and Francis Center is a year-round shelter for the homeless.

"It really opens you up to what other people don't have," commented April Sullivan, a 19-year-old sophomore who also took part in last year's volunteer day.

Another sophomore, 20-year-old Lota Gravell, noted that the experience she went through as a freshman brought her extremely close to the other volunteers.

"Five of us ended up becoming best friends," she said.

Father Paul English, the college's campus ministry director, said that the day's intent is "for freshmen to get the sense that Fisher students are committed to community service, not just self-serving goals."

'When you work side-by-side like that, you really get to know people.'

Julie Wightman
Nazareth College freshman

Aquinas receives grant from State Energy Office

ROCHESTER — The State Energy Office has awarded Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave., a \$3,485 grant.

The funds came from the energy office's Not-For-Profit and Public Facility Energy Conservation Rebate Program. The money will cover half of the expenses from a new energy-efficient lighting system to be installed at Aquinas.

The state program is funded with overcharge money recovered from oil companies that violated former pricing regulations from 1974-81. Money is returned to consumers through a variety of energy-efficiency programs.

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