

# City group seeks peace, not conflict

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Students are taught more than basic skills such as arithmetic and spelling at Most Precious Blood School, 179 Stenson St.

Through a program called Neighborhood HOPE, youths also learn how to respond if somebody cuts in front of them at the water fountain.

"Obviously you could bump that person back, but then you're both going to go to the principal's office," said Nancy Donatucci, the program's coordinator. "We teach assertive techniques where you can stand for your rights without using your fists."

"We try to show you how to get out of situations without looking like a jerk or without losing friends," Pat Prusak, a program volunteer, recently told a class of sixth-graders at Most Precious Blood School.

Neighborhood HOPE — an acronym for Helping Ourselves Peacefully Exist — is a non-profit program devoted to peaceful conflict resolution for residents and students on the city's northwest side.

The organization, located at 48 Cameron St., began in 1984 as a neighborhood group for the Lyell Avenue-Otis Street area. It expanded into area schools in 1989 following a request from Frank Scalise, then the principal of No. 34 School.

"He said, 'What can you do to help? We need this program in the schools, not just in the neighborhood,'" Donatucci recalled.

Since that time, Neighborhood HOPE has expanded its services to encompass approximately 50 classrooms in six elementary schools.

The program is beginning its third year at Most Precious Blood. Other participating schools, all from the Rochester City School District, are: No. 5 School, 555 Plymouth Ave. N.; No. 30 School, 36 Otis St.; No. 34 School, 530 Lexington Ave.; No. 43 School, 1305 Lyell Ave.; and No. 57 School, 15 Costar St.

Donatucci coordinates a staff of 14 trained volunteers — mostly neighborhood residents — to work in classrooms for at least 10 weeks. The 40-minute sessions are conducted weekly.

In the program's early stages, students' self-esteem is reinforced



Randolph Kinhead, a.k.a. Rambunctious Randy, reacts during the first session of Neighborhood HOPE's conflict resolution training course at Most Precious Blood School in Rochester. Students passed a stuffed globe around the room and picked double-initial nicknames with positive connotations.

through a series of fun activities. For instance, Prusak instructs children to pick double-initial nicknames for themselves which also carry positive connotations: Terrific Troy, Talented Tyesha, Neat Natalie, and so on.

The final sessions are marked by role-playing during potential conflict situations.

"We work on verbal and non-verbal communication, then cooperation, then problem-solving," said Prusak.

Donatucci noted that the program can be informative not only for children, but instructors as well.

"Every teacher obviously encounters conflict in the classroom, but they may or may not deal with it depending on their style. This (program) is a time when we're all going to learn some skills. The teacher is involved as well as the student," said Donatucci.

Danielle Warren, a fifth-grade student at Most Precious Blood, said the program has helped her.

"When somebody says something you don't like, you try not to say anything bad. You just learn to be friends," said Warren, 10.

Students who excel in these sessions are designated as permanent peer mediators. They are then given yellow T-shirts saying "Conflict Manager."

Although some youth services had to be cut back this year because of budget constraints, the school program will be funded at least through 1993, according to Donatucci.

"I have a paid position for 10 hours per week, and we also have to cover

*When somebody says something you don't like, you try not to say anything bad. You just learn to be friends.*

Danielle Warren  
Most Precious Blood fifth-grader

costs for the volunteers like travel expenses and babysitting," she said.

Donatucci is hoping that community funding for Neighborhood HOPE will grow now that, for the first time, the organization is listed as a donor-option agency with the United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc. She added that community feedback has affirmed the program's value.

"Every school we've gone into has asked us back," she said.

Prusak notices Neighborhood HOPE's valuable effects when she enters No. 30 school, where two of her children attend.

"You're in the halls and you hear kids use words and expressions that you know came from you, like 'how can we resolve this conflict,'" she said.

## Chastity advocate will speak in Newark and Palmyra

"Chastity and Teens" will be the topic of upcoming presentations in Newark and Palmyra.

Molly Kelly will appear on Monday, Oct. 26, in the Newark High School Auditorium from 7:30-9:00 p.m., and Tuesday, Oct. 27 from 3:30-5 p.m. at St. Anne's Church Hall, 136 Church Street, Palmyra. This session will include a half-hour question and answer segment.

Kelly is an internationally known speaker, author and mother of eight.

She travels throughout the world, speaking to more than 100,000 teens a year promoting chastity. An honors graduate of Trinity College in Washington, D.C., she annually organizes conferences on teen sexuality which bring together educators, counselors, school nurses, parents and staffers from agencies that deal with teen concerns.

For information on the presentations in Newark and Palmyra, call Colleen Spelley at 315/539-3031.

## Elmira students to commemorate drug awareness week

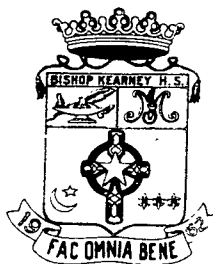
ELMIRA — An assembly to kick off Red Ribbon Week will be held on Monday, Oct. 26, in the Holy Family Primary School gymnasium, 421 Fulton St.

Elmira Mayor James Hare will issue a proclamation and Officer Robert

Moran will deliver a lecture about the dangers of drugs.

Students will wear red ribbons all week to commemorate the program, which was designed to raise student awareness regarding drug abuse.

**Academics..... Values.....  
Respect for the Individual  
Bishop Kearney High School**



**OPEN HOUSE  
Sunday, October 25, 1 p.m.-3:30p.m.**

125 Kings Highway South, Rochester, NY 14617-5596  
342 - 4000

**BARTOLOMEO  
FUNERAL HOME, INC.**



Peter W. Guillari Jr. Philip P. Perotto Michael P. Perotto  
Personalized service in the community since 1922.

1425 Lexington Avenue Rochester, NY 14606  
conveniently located near 390  
**(716) 254-5400**



**THE HARLEY SALE**

Oct. 23rd - 10am-6pm  
Oct. 24th - 10-3 (Super Sale)  
Winter Clothing for All, Furniture, Household Goods, Books, Antiques & Collectibles, Boutique, Sporting Goods  
*A Sale you can't afford to miss!*

**The Harley School**  
1981 Clover Street, Brighton

