

Group in Tier builds toward trip to Puerto Rico

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

LANSING — Now that they've honed their skills locally, these Southern Tier youths will apply their community-service abilities on an international level.

Nine Tompkins County teenagers and three adults are about to embark on an 11-day journey to Puerto Rico, where they will help rebuild structures ravaged by Hurricane Hugo. Although nearly three years have passed since the 1990 hurricane, many edifices throughout Puerto Rico are still awaiting repair after being leveled.

The group's excursion will take place from March 18-29. This trip, which has been in the planning stages for about a year, will comprise parishioners from All Saints Church, 347 Ridge Road; its sister parish, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine Circle, Ithaca; and members of the Lansing United Methodist Church.

This is the most elaborate in a series of projects on which the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches in the village of Lansing have collaborated.

"It's kind of neat that two denominations can get together like this," noted Dana Cruikshank, a junior at Lansing High School. He will be making the Puerto Rico journey along with his father, William Cruikshank, pastor at Lansing United Methodist.

Although the Puerto Rican population is predominately Catholic, William Cruikshank noted that Methodists represent that island's largest Protestant denomination.

The group will focus its efforts on Patillas, located along Puerto Rico's south coast. In Patillas, they will work on rebuilding a camp owned by the United Methodist Women.

In addition, the dozen volunteers will visit a shelter in the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan.



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Next month these youths and adults from All Saints Church in Lansing, St. Catherine's Church in Ithaca and Lansing United Methodist Church are slated to travel to Puerto Rico, where they will help rebuild structures ravaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1990.

Many members of this contingent warmed up for their big trip back in October, when they assisted the Tompkins/Cortland Habitat for Humanity. That group helped erect a new home — in one day — for a family in Newfield, Tompkins County.

Another component in the preparation process — fundraising — has perhaps been more of a challenge than any construction work. Some of the group's money-generating efforts have involved baby-sitting, window and car washing, a bottle drive, a spaghetti dinner, and sales of such items as

Christmas cards and baked goods.

According to Gail Riina, pastoral associate at All Saints, the group is currently about \$1,500 shy of the estimated \$8,000 cost for this trip.

None of the 12 travelers have ever visited Puerto Rico, so at this point they're not quite sure what to expect when they arrive there.

"I've never even been in a plane before. I'm scared to death," laughed Stephanie Skroback, a Lansing High junior who attends Lansing United Methodist.

On the other hand, Tim Pasto, a Lansing High freshman and All Saints parishioner, is looking forward to his role as a helping hand.

"I thought it would be pretty nice to

see these people's faces after we'd helped them," Pasto commented.

Shilo McGiff, a Lansing High junior and All Saints parishioner, pointed out that the physical labor will only be a part of a bigger picture.

"This is more about everybody coming together as a group, as a team," she said.

Additional youth members on this trip will include Jason Keeney and his sister Tiffany, both St. Catherine of Siena parishioners; April Crout from All Saints; and Jenn Reardon and Jay Travis from Lansing United Methodist. Other adult members will be Riina and Lansing United Methodist youth advisor Andy Loeffler.

Mercy, McQuaid students team up for March musical

BRIGHTON — Students from Our Lady of Mercy and McQuaid Jesuit high schools will present four showings of *West Side Story* next month. The performances will be held in the Mercy auditorium, 1437 Blossom Road.

This Jerome Robbins/Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim musical will

be shown on March 12, 13, 19 and 20. Each show will begin at 8 p.m. A total of 45 performers from Mercy and McQuaid will take the stage.

Tickets, at \$8 for adults and \$6 for students and senior citizens, can be ordered by calling 716/288-7120. Tickets will also be available at the door.

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