

Volunteerism brings out vibrancy in student

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — Despite the extensive volunteer work Jennifer Hill performs, the 22-year-old still feels her mission is far from complete.

The senior at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave., is not simply focused on her own activities. Her big priority is to get others involved as well.

Hill has volunteered since January of 1993 at the Isaiah House, 71 Prince St., Rochester. This home for the dying is conducted as an outreach ministry of Corpus Christi Church, 864 Main St. E., Rochester.

Working with the dying, Hill maintains, is anything but the morbid experience most people make it out to be. Her cheery, upbeat demeanor helps back up that assertion.

"Whenever you tell people you work in a home for the dying, they say, 'Ooh, how depressing,'" acknowledged Hill, who is majoring in gerontology. "They don't realize how beautiful it can be. Hospice care is life; the whole idea is that these people are living as much as they possibly can.

"I think anybody can do this, I really do. People's fears, misconceptions and ignorance really hold them back. I wish it could be required for everyone. I'm really thankful for it because it's done things for me that I really can't explain," added Hill, a native of Red Creek in Wayne County.

Hill's interest in the dying, she says, was furthered by her own personal experience: when she was 16, her father,



Jennifer Hill (right) shares a light moment with Rachel, a resident at the Kyle Drive Group Home in Penfield. Hill visited the home Oct. 21 with her Circle K group to help residents carve pumpkins.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Galin "Clem" Hill, passed away suddenly at the age of 50.

Her work at Isaiah House is just one on a long list of Hill's volunteer activities.

She currently serves as lieutenant governor of the Finger Lakes-Genesee Division of Circle K, an international collegiate service organization which operates in conjunction with Kiwanis Club.

Hill has been an active part of Circle K since her freshman year, and last year served as president of her campus group. Over the years she has helped organize fundraising events through Circle K for several community organ-

izations.

The Fisher senior also participates in the Rochester-area Big Brother-Big Sister program. In addition, she dances in St. John Fisher's annual 24-hour charity dance marathon for Camp Good Days and Special Times.

Add it all up, and it's no surprise that Hill was selected last spring as recipient of the college's Ann B. and Martin F. Birmingham Student Volunteer Recognition Award. Along with a certificate of achievement, Hill received \$3,500 in scholarship aid and \$500 in cash.

The timing of this honor, she said, couldn't have been better.

"I was in the financial aid office asking if there was any way I was going to get more money so I could come

back to school this year," she said.

Although she reported to be "ecstatic for days" upon learning of her selection, Hill also emphasized that it was not an award for which she openly campaigned.

"I am very proud of it, but I felt embarrassed because you don't do it (volunteer) for that reason," she said.

Hill is considering a career in nursing. She also might follow in the footsteps of her mother, Marjorie Hill, a social worker at the Oswego Mental Health Hospital.

Not surprisingly, Hill also entertains thoughts of eventually running a hospice.

"I know it's always going to be a part of my life," she said.

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Diocese schedules five high-school retreats

Five high-school retreats have been scheduled for various parts of the diocese over the next several months.

For students in grades 9-10, the first of three "Awakening Faith" retreats will be held Dec. 3-5, 1993, at Camp Casawasco in Auburn. A similar event is set for March 11-13, 1994, at Watson Homestead in Painted Post. Freshmen and sophomores may also attend a retreat scheduled for May 6-8, 1994, at Camp Stella Maris in Livonia.

Two additional retreats, titled "Encountering Christ," have been set for high-schoolers in grades 11 and 12. The first will be Feb. 20-22, 1994, at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua. Also, a grade 11-12 retreat will take place April 22-24, 1994, at Watson Homestead.

For details on any of these retreats, contact Michael Theisen, diocesan youth coordinator, at 1-800/388-7177, ext. 279.

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