

# Ministry spurs motivation for Mercy students

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Krista Zimmer is a perfect example of what Sue Clifford had envisioned when she put an idea into action four years ago.

Clifford, the grade 7-8 department coordinator at Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road, initiated a ministry program in which all students in seventh- and eighth-grade are required to participate.

Yet once the students became exposed to volunteerism, several have made plans to carry on this type of work even when it is no longer mandatory.

Zimmer, for example, hopes to continue assisting with the Ss. Peter and Paul Day Care Center, 720 W. Main St.

"I really look forward to these times, and now I want to do it on my own time," said Zimmer, an eighth-grader. "I look forward to working with children."

Most of the ministry program's efforts are concentrated in city locales such as Ss. Peter and Paul's. On a recent day in November, for example, 52 eighth-graders split up into small groups with one adult supervisor each. Group members donated their time to organizations such as St. Peter's Kitchen, St. Monica Pre-School, Bethany House, Habitat for Humanity, Maria House, Foodlink, the Ronald McDonald House, St. Andrew Day Care and Most Precious Blood School.

On Nov. 30, many of these same places will be visited by 48 seventh-



Krista Zimmer (left), an eighth-grader at Our Lady of Mercy High School, helps Brandy Harper (middle) with her turkey painting while Chrishara Clarke keeps her eyes on the photographer at Ss. Peter and Paul Day Care Center Nov. 15.



Seema Dhaliwal (right) keeps Dion Walker busy coloring a cornucopia.

graders from the all-girls' school. According to Clifford, each grade makes four or five trips per school year.

Clifford has been overjoyed at the project's overall results thus far.

"I can tell you that there's not a single eighth-grader missing today," she said during the most recent outing. "I've been amazed at the number who would like to continue this past the eighth grade."

She added that some of the junior-

high age students are already going a step beyond by putting in volunteer time on weekends.

Zimmer spent her most recent visit at Ss. Peter and Paul's by reading stories to children age 3-5, and helping with such Thanksgiving-related activities as painting a picture of a turkey. The latter task proved dangerous, however: Zimmer and her classmates had to move nimbly to avoid having their white uniform blouses get sullied by a little painter's errant brush.

Further holiday-related work was performed that day at Foodlink, a food-distribution center located at 56 West Ave. There, the eighth-graders assisted in preparing Thanksgiving food baskets for the poor.

The 13-year-old Zimmer, a Fairport resident, said that volunteering in the city was a new experience for her.

"I didn't realize how many people were in need, because I was used to having my mom and dad do things," remarked Zimmer, who has also spent time at Foodlink, Ronald McDonald House, and Association for Retarded Citizens since she began attending Mercy.

Yet Zimmer and her fellow students have adapted quickly, she acknowledged.

"I like the fact that we're going out into the community. Instead of sitting back and not doing anything, we're getting involved," she said.

## Deaf acting group available for Rochester-area schools

ROCHESTER — A storytelling troupe comprising four deaf actors and one hearing actor is available for performances at area middle and elementary schools.

The group, known as LIGHTS ON!, acts out 40- to 50-minute stories relating to subjects such as the environment, relationships and cultural diversity. Members will also deal with

other subject matters upon advance request.

LIGHTS ON! performs with the assistance of a grant from the Esther Usdane Memorial Fund through the Rochester Area Foundation.

Those wishing to schedule a performance date with this group may call Dennis Smith at 716/242-8524 (voice) or 242-8526 (TTY).

## CYO to host Dec. 3 conference on services for youth

ROCHESTER — A conference titled "Falling Through the Cracks: How to Keep 13-15 Year Olds on the Success Track" will be held on Friday, Dec. 3, at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, 1100 S. Goodman St.

This event, which will run from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m., is being hosted by the Catholic Youth Organization of the Catholic Family Center. The confer-

ence will include presentations by several Rochester-area experts on youth services. Closing the day will be a teen panel discussion hosted by former local radio personality Kenneth "Tiny" Glover.

Cost is \$20 per person and includes lunch. For details, call the CYO office at 716/454-2030.



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