

Nazareth student backs up words with actions

Senior promotes youth activism

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Her list of youth-related affiliations is impressive.

Even more noteworthy are the things Jaime Tackett says to support the causes with which she aligns herself.

Tackett, a senior at Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., served as the youth keynote speaker at the third annual Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau conference. This event was held Nov. 18 at the Riverside Convention Center, 123 E. Main St.

Her opening remarks were packed with reality. Tackett cited grim statistics about youths in Monroe County, reporting that more than 22,000 young people live in poverty and that Rochester has the highest per-capita rate of teen pregnancies in New York state with 1,600 pregnancies per year.

Tackett went on to encourage her fellow teens in the audience to fully live the day's theme, "Youth Can Make a Difference."

A crowded room of youths listened to Tackett's words: the Convention Center gathering set an all-time high of 450 participants, with representatives from every high school — both public and private — in Monroe County.

"People really don't know how much of a problem there is, and how the community is deteriorating," Tackett told the *Catholic Courier*. "I want to make people who are here today realize they can make a difference."

The all-day conference offered 25 workshops dealing with issues concerning modern youths, such as poverty, unemployment, AIDS, suicide and depression, homosexuality, cults and violence. Several of the workshops urged participants to increase their level of volunteerism.

Tackett was chosen to speak at this



Jaime Tackett, a Nazareth Academy senior, was the keynote speaker during the third annual Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau conference at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center on Nov. 18. S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

conference because of her longstanding involvement with the Rochester-area Youth Participation Project. She has been associated with YPP since her freshman year at Nazareth and has helped plan several youth conferences during that time. In addition, Tackett sits on the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Board.

She also tackles the issues through groups at her high school. She is a member of Nazareth Academy's chapter of Amnesty International, a human-rights organization working to focus attention on men, women and children imprisoned throughout the world for

peacefully expressing their political and/or religious beliefs. Tackett says Amnesty "is very near and dear to me." The 17-year-old senior serves on the school's Student Senate as well.

Tackett acknowledged that the open-minded philosophy promoted at Nazareth Academy has helped her become more outspoken.

"I see people from other schools and sometimes they're not as confident dealing with problems, whereas at Nazareth, that's what we do," she observed.

With her youth group at Holy Cross Church, 4492 Lake Ave., Tackett is cur-

rently involved in a fundraising project to sponsor a local billboard which would display a non-violence message.

"I've never been able to stand watching violence," Tackett commented.

She plans on continuing her activism during and after college. Yet, rather than enter politics, she says she's favoring a more hands-on approach to her career.

"I want to work with people and help them at their level — whether it be social work or teaching. I like children especially," she said.

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