

YOUTH FEATURE

College life clicks for three Penn Yan youths

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PENN YAN — Recruiters from Nazareth College of Rochester obviously did their job well when they passed through Penn Yan last year.

By attending the same college, the trio of Erin Murphy, Cara Castelluzzo and Elizabeth Martini has been able to extend the day-to-day contact they've enjoyed ever since they were kindergartners at St. Michael's School.

"I can remember them with their little curls, coming into church," remarked Mary Tyrrell, who serves as religious-education coordinator at St. Michael's Church, 312 Liberty St.

Now these young girls have blossomed into young ladies. The 1993 graduates of Penn Yan Academy have moved on from this Yates County village, located at the northern tip of Keuka Lake, and are enthusiastically immersing themselves into higher education.

Home on break after the first semester of their freshman year at Nazareth, each of the 18-year-olds reports to be making a smooth transition. All achieved grade-point averages above 3.0, and all seem to enjoy campus life in general.

Castelluzzo, a speech pathology major, said she was most surprised by "how well I adjusted. I was so petrified about my roommate at first, but we get along great. I was also thinking I couldn't meet people or they wouldn't like me."

"I thought I'd be so homesick, but I wasn't," added Murphy, who is leaning toward a math or elementary education major. "I like living on my own. The people I live around, we got to be so close."



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Cara Castelluzzo (left), Erin Murphy (center) and Elizabeth Martini sit in the stairwell of the office building at St. Michael's Parish in Penn Yan. All three parishioners were Hands of Christ Award recipients and attend Nazareth College of Rochester.

Castelluzzo noted that this closeness extends from seeing the same people on a 24-hour basis. "It's not like in high school, when you wouldn't see your friends until the next day," she said.

Martini prefers Nazareth's cozy atmosphere over the hustle and bustle she experienced during visits to Syracuse University.

"I like Nazareth for the small classes. I can't imagine what it would be like to be in a class with 100 people in it," said Martini, who is considering a biology or Spanish major.

As the 1993-94 school year's second semester gets underway, Martini is look-

ing to get involved in Spanish Club while Murphy would like to join the French Club. Both are interested in Amnesty International as well.

Castelluzzo, meanwhile, is already active in campus ministry. She said she especially enjoys attending Mass with so many people about the same age as her. "The Mass is more directly related to you, and it's really upbeat. It's a good time," she remarked.

Church-related activities played a big part in all three youths' lives prior to their arrival at Nazareth: each served as catechists in the religious-education program at St. Michael's during their high-school years.

This past April, their volunteer efforts were acknowledged when each received a Hands of Christ Award, given by the Diocese of Rochester to high-school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional service.

Tyrrell acknowledged that since Murphy, Castelluzzo and Martini have a strong background in academics and extracurricular activities, it's no mere coincidence they have managed to avoid the "dropout syndrome" which hampers many college freshmen every year.

"I think they're self-sufficient, or they wouldn't have done what they did in high school," said Tyrrell.

Kearney seeks volunteers to help out with painting

IRONDEQUOIT — Volunteers are needed for two "Painting Days" at Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Highway S. The dates are Jan. 8 and Feb. 5, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. each day.

No experience is necessary. Painting supplies, coffee, doughnuts and pizza will be offered while hallways and classrooms are painted.

To volunteer, call Len Johnson at 716/544-1284.



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