

YOUTH FEATURE

Rochester teenagers share dreams of peace

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Those driving by the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Bartlett Street, or the corner of Portland Avenue and Syracuse Street, may have noticed a rather out-of-the-ordinary billboard display earlier this week.

The two billboards, printed over portraits of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., deliver a simple message: "Live the Dream ... Stop the Violence — Teens for Peace."

If the signs caught your attention long enough to wonder who was responsible for them, you can get your answer by stopping at St. Bridget's Church this Friday evening, Jan. 14.

And at that point, you'll discover that a group of teenagers intends to reinforce its message long after the billboards come down.

A peace rally and prayer service will take place at St. Bridget's, 175 St. Bridget's Drive. The event is scheduled to run from 7:30-9 p.m.

During the service, teens will address the evening's theme — based on Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech — by sharing their own dreams of peace. Those attending will also be issued "commitment cards" which profess a non-violent lifestyle.

According to Joe DiVincenzo, youth ministry coordinator at Holy Cross Church, 4492 Lake Ave., the roots for this peace campaign can be traced back to the diocesan Synod in early October of 1993. At the time, DiVincenzo and Holy Cross youth-group member Jaime Tackett discussed long-term methods of speaking out against violence.

It wasn't long before other Holy Cross teens joined in the effort. The youths staged a fundraising campaign to erect the billboards, which will be displayed at their current locations for approximately one more month.

Now known as Teens for Peace, the group has grown to include St. Bridget's youths. And, if all goes well, Teens for Peace will soon include a large number of Rochester teenagers of all denominations.

DiVincenzo noted that area parishes and schools have been notified of the Jan. 14 peace rally, and several local dig-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Farah Cherubin (left) and Kijana Danzy (right) assist Toni Danzy with her 'I Have a Dream' speech during the youths' Jan. 5 rehearsal for an upcoming peace rally



Aquinas Institute's Paul Nichols works on his material in a pew at St. Bridget's Church, site of the service.



To conclude the rehearsal at St. Bridget's Church, members of the newly-formed Teens for Peace joined hands for a group prayer.

own lives.

Farah Cherubin, a 15-year-old sophomore at Nazareth Academy, said she got involved with Teens for Peace because she is concerned about the daily threat of violence.

"I don't hardly go out anymore because I'm afraid," said Cherubin. "Every week it's something new."

Mike Smith, who conceived the billboard slogan, said it was important to include Dr. King in any message of non-violence.

"Martin Luther King wanted everyone to live in peace, but there are a lot of people living in pain," observed Smith, a 16-year-old junior at Aquinas Institute.

DiVincenzo noted that Dr. King also promoted interracial cooperation, and that Teens for Peace is doing an excellent job of fulfilling that dream.

"I have a vivid memory of these people laughing and with their arms around each other, and myself saying, 'Lord, wouldn't it be great if the world could be like that?'" DiVincenzo remarked.

EDITORS' NOTE:

In next week's youth feature, Mike Latona will provide coverage of the Jan. 14 youth event at St. Bridget's.

Young musical troupes sing at shopping mall

BRIGHTON — Youths from Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Rhinecliff and Imperial drives, brought holiday cheer to Marketplace Mall on the evening of Dec. 16.

A boys' and girls' choir, comprising children in grades 3-6, sang Christmas songs for shoppers at the mall in Henrietta. Later in the program, the Our Lady of Lourdes Handbell Choir also performed.

"We're proud of these children's commitment to serve their church and their eagerness to share their gifts with our community as well," said Kathryn Weider, children's choir director at Our Lady of Lourdes.

nitaries — including Bishop Matthew H. Clark — have been invited.

He emphasized that the service should not be perceived as a one-time-only effort.

"I'd be really happy if 50 teens who are interested in making this happen

show up. It's not the number, it's the commitment," DiVincenzo commented.

In the upcoming months, Teens for Peace plans to set up a telephone line so that youths can discuss issues such as violence, or call for help if they are experiencing this type of trouble in their

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