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# Cooking up a feast

Fourteen youth-group members from Rochester's St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave., and five adults visited the Ronald McDonald House on Nov. 19. They prepared a spaghetti-and-meatball dinner for the temporary residents of the facility for families of ailing children.



From left, Director of Youth Ministry Alice Leistman, Matthew Kenny and Sheena Matthew form an assembly line to prepare meatballs. Last year the youths served 26 people; this year the busy cooks provided dinner for approximately 60 people.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
Ashley McLean concentrates on chopping vegetables for the large salad.

## Aiding in AIDS awareness: young teens stage program

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — If a survey were taken to determine the best-known movie dealing with AIDS, the leading candidate would most likely be "Philadelphia."

Yet it was another 1993 film, Home Box Office's "And the Band Played On," which first provided Jennifer Hite and Erin Welch with jarring information connected with AIDS.

For both youths, one of the docudrama's most gripping scenes occurs at the end of the film. As Elton John's "The Last Song" is played, footage shows a number of celebrities such as Rock Hudson and Freddie Mercury who have died from AIDS-related complications.

Now, as World AIDS Day is observed on Thursday, Dec. 1, Jennifer and Erin can be proud that their own recent efforts have helped classmates gain a broader understanding of AIDS as well.

The impact of "And the Band Played On" inspired Jennifer and Erin to stage an "AIDS Awareness Day" on Oct. 20. This program was held at Northeastern Catholic Junior High School, 125 Kings Highway S., where Jennifer and Erin are both eighth-graders.

Some of the day's activities included the showing of a tape on AIDS geared toward adolescents; the sale of 274 red ribbons for \$1 each to raise money toward AIDS Rochester; and a seminar given by a representative from AIDS Rochester as well as a man who has been HIV-positive for nine years.

Both young organizers termed the program a success.

"When we had to stop, five of the kids still had questions," noted Erin, 13, a parishioner at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 4536 St. Paul Blvd. "I would love to do more stuff like this," added Jennifer, 14, a parishioner at St. Margaret Mary Church, 401 Rogers Parkway.

Erin emphasized that the program was presented strictly as an awareness effort and did not issue any directives about sexual activity.

"We had to have a written guarantee



S. John Wilkin/Staff Photographer  
Jennifer Hite (top) and Erin Welch organized an AIDS awareness day this past fall for their fellow students.

from AIDS Rochester that they wouldn't say anything about birth control or homosexuality," said Erin. "They had to conform to the diocesan regulations of health education."

Northeastern principal Joseph Holleran said he realized that the program was addressing controversial subject matter, but remarked, "I felt it was worth the risk of parental opposition because the benefits of the information far overshadowed those concerns."

He also pointed out that there were no strong reactions from parents, and none of the 300 Northeastern seventh- and eighth-graders was intentionally held out of school that day.

Northeastern's principal applauded the initiative taken by Jennifer and Erin, saying, "They have a lot of energy and they channeled it in the right direction."

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