

Auburn class pens letter to Clinton; awaits reply

AUBURN — Writing a letter to President Bill Clinton meant more to Jaelyn Borza and her peers than she originally thought it would.

"At first our whole class was like, 'He won't even read it; it won't make a difference.' But then as we were writing it, everyone changed their minds," said Jaelyn, 13. "It was important just to let him know we care."

Jaelyn and 10 other members of the confirmation class at St. Mary's Church, 15 Clark St., provided input for the letter by listing their concerns regarding current national issues.

"They more or less all contributed evenly," said Joseph Sarnicola, who teaches the St. Mary's group along with Michael Mancini. "I guided them

a little, but most of their ideas were the way they wanted to say it."

Sarnicola added that although the class members have yet to receive a reply from President Clinton concerning the document which was mailed Nov. 14, they are hopeful that one is forthcoming.

Other letter contributors included Donald Alnutt; Kelly Brown; Jessica Burger; Renee Charles; Melissa Dagnesi; Tracy Dare; Brian Dautrich; Tim Donohue; Jonathan Fronczek; and Marc Homick. The 11 youths were among approximately 50 candidates confirmed on Wednesday, Dec. 7, by Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

The letter's contents appear below. — Mike Latona

President Clinton:

We are a part of the 1994 Confirmation Class of St. Mary's Church in Auburn, N.Y. As a first step in taking a more active role in our church and community, we would like to bring some of the concerns we have to your attention.

Most importantly, we want peace in the world. We know there is war and violence in Haiti, the Middle East, Bosnia, and other parts of the world. We are also aware of violence, domestic abuse in families, and cruelty to animals in our own cities. While we recognize that drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, lack of education and lack of proper health care only make matter worse, we would like to see this situation improve.

We would also like to have a clean and safe environment. We have seen the effects of pollution, both accidental and intentional, and we have also seen the loss of habitats for wildlife and the destruction of wetlands and natural resources. All too frequently this destruction occurs because of selfishness and carelessness.

We want to uphold humane treatment for every living person and creature on the earth and respectful care for the earth itself and we are hopeful about the future. As Christians, we want to do our part to make the world a more peaceful place, so we offer the following suggestions:

- Families and individuals should be offered counseling, financial assistance, or the appropriate support services for their needs.
- Criminals should receive suitable punishment for their crimes which will hopefully discourage other criminals from committing other crimes, and more crime prevention programs should be available.
- Recycling and care of the earth should be a top priority, and environmentally protective laws should be enforced.

We know you are busy, but we hope you will be able to take the time to consider and respond to our requests and suggestions.



Provided photo

Kaitlin Hunkele paints part of the walking bridge at Elmira Free Academy.

Joint effort gets job done in Tier

ELMIRA — Based on their recent service record, "joining forces" is a fitting term for the example set by two local youth groups who have indeed become a singular force.

Beginning in September, a number of events and projects have included both youths at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 304 Demarest Parkway; and at Eastside Catholic Parish, which comprises St. Cecilia Church, 950 Lake St.; St. John the Baptist Church, 325 Lake St.; and St. Peter and Paul Church, Market and High streets.

These young Catholics have used their combined efforts to perform several outreach services. Among them were Cancer Walk and Crop Walk; a cleanup effort on Elmira Free Academy's grounds for October's "Make a Difference Day;" and a Halloween

canned-food drive also held that month which was followed by an Oct. 31 party for the participants.

According to Lisa Johnson, who serves as full-time youth minister for Our Lady of Lourdes and Eastside Catholic Parish, the food drive, in particular, was an overwhelming success. Through the youths' diligent efforts, two van loads of food were collected for the Eastside Catholic Parish food pantry located at St. Cecilia's.

"There was so much food, they couldn't even fit it into the closet. It was an amazing, fabulous job by the kids," Johnson said.

She added that the youth groups are planning to perform Christmas carols Dec. 18-19 at St. Joseph's Hospital and Arnot Ogden Medical Center.

— Mike Latona

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