

YOUTH FEATURE

DYC teens make fast friends at state meeting

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HORSEHEADS — Although she was meeting many people for the first time, they just didn't seem like strangers to Tara Anzalone.

"Everyone here is, like, so open. It's so easy to relate to everyone. I've had a lot of deep conversations that I don't have with half my friends in school," said Tara, a parishioner of the St. Thomas Aquinas/St. Lucy cluster in Leicester and Retsof, Livingston County.

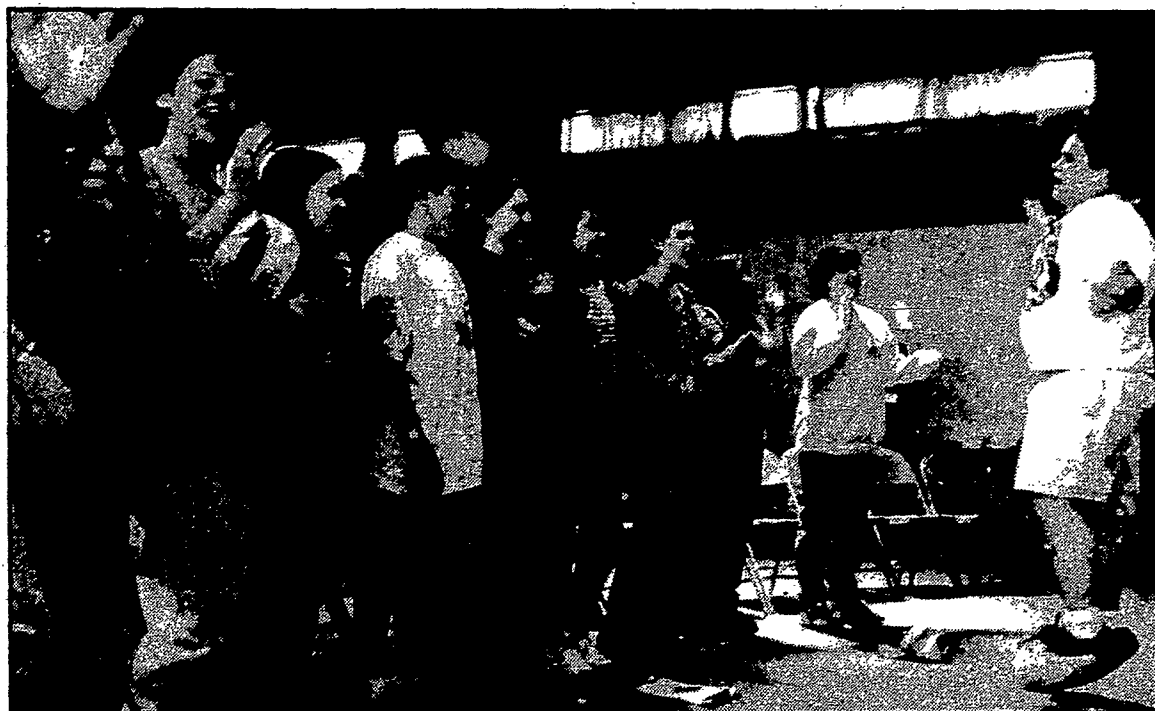
Tara and 12 other teenagers on the Diocesan Youth Committee met with Catholic youths from all over New York state at the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry's Region II Youth Leadership Spring Meeting last weekend. The three-day event, hosted this year by the Rochester diocese, took place April 21-23 at St. Mary Our Mother School, 811 Westlake St.

More than 70 youths and adult leaders, representing all eight dioceses in the state, traveled to Chemung County for the 15th annual meeting. Activities included several discussions and prayer sessions, as well as a daylong series of workshops April 22.

The first two workshops, led by the dioceses of Rockville Centre and Albany, centered on personal stress and helping people in stressful situations. Numerous causes of stress were identified, such as family matters, busy schedules, dating, jobs, money, drugs and alcohol, and peer pressure.

During a small-group session on ways to deal with stress, Brian Fesetch suggested going to the person who's causing the stress and discussing the matter.

Brian — a parishioner at Elmira's Eastside Catholic Parish, which consists of St. Peter and Paul, St. Cecilia's and St. John the Baptist churches — also shared



a coping mechanism for stress that his parents use with him.

"They say, 'Brian, do you want to play some cards?' By the time I'm done playing, I forget what I was stressed about," Brian said.

In addition, participants noted negative ways of handling stress such as suicide, repressing one's feelings, and denial. These two workshops concluded with everyone silently reflecting on their most significant personal stresses, and asking God for help.

Included in the stress workshops were drills designed to enhance listening skills and time management. One small group during this segment featured four DYC members acting as designated talkers and listeners: Ann Kidera (St. Thomas More, Rochester), Dan Kwiccién (St. Mary of the Assumption, Scottsville), Kevin Morriss (St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport) and Tara.

The group concluded that Dan did a good job of listening to some of Tara's struggles, and that Ann did likewise with Kevin.

However, Ann noted later, it's not so simple to be a good listener. Had she not been assigned that particular role, she acknowledged, "I would've interrupted Kevin."

In the time-management workshop, Mande Mastin decided that she could do a better job avoiding procrastinating with her homework.

"I just keep putting it off and putting it off, so I'm doing homework at 11 o'clock," said Mande, a parishioner at St. Mary's Church in Honeoye.

Later Saturday, the Brooklyn diocese conducted a workshop on serving people in need. Categories included the homeless, AIDS, suicide/depression, age discrimination, and hate-crime victims such as homosexuals. The afternoon concluded with a workshop on methods of praying led by the Syracuse diocese.

Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator for youth ministry, noted that the spring meeting's activities enhanced his youths both personally and as DYC representatives.

"This gives them additional leadership skills," Theisen concluded.



(Top) Kevin Morriss of Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist Church leads a song before the start of afternoon workshops at the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministries regional leadership meeting in Horseheads. (Above) Brian Fesetch, representing Elmira's Eastside Catholic Parish, participates in a workshop on AIDS awareness.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

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