

# Faith in the Workplace



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## Clicking with troubled kids through compassion

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Even with people who have committed crimes as serious as murder, Jack Rosati refuses to waive his everyday philosophy.

Hate the sin, but love the sinner.

When you're less than 16 years old and facing the possibility of living behind bars for several years, a little bit of Rosati's sensitivity can go a long way.

Especially since that's more compassion than many residents of the Monroe County Children's Center — where Rosati is director — have ever received while growing up.

"I firmly believe in holding kids accountable. But it's also important to understand how they got there," Rosati pointed out.

"The philosophy we have — and this is what makes me survive — is, 'A childhood for every child.' Most of the kids that come in here never had a childhood — Christmas tree, a pumpkin, receiving gifts," he added.

"This is the last shot for a lot of these kids. There's a lot of people who want to label them as thugs, lock them up and throw away the key. All they see is the criminal act, and they never see the kid. But most of the ones who come through here show the capability and desire to change."

Rosati, 48, has served as director at the Children's Center, located on Westfall Road, for nine years. According to Rosati, the 45-bed detention center is frequently filled to capacity, has an approximate male representation of 90 percent, and houses children ages 10-15.

If people in this age range have played a part in headline-making crimes in the Rochester area such as armed robbery, rape or murder, chances are that Rosati has spent a fair amount of time with them.

Children are detained at the center and placed under 24-hour supervision while they await or undergo trial — a process that could take anywhere from a few days to years. If convicted of charges, they are then transferred by the New York State Division for Youth to a juvenile facility within the state. At age 18, they enter an adult prison if their sentences have not yet expired.

During their time at the Children's Center, the youths attend daily classes and also undergo a series of evaluations. In addition, they're offered several recreational activities.

Rosati noted that the role of his staff is not to determine the innocence, guilt or sentence length of a child. However, he said, "We can certainly help influence as to what might be the most appropriate placement possible."

In the meantime, Rosati attempts to prepare youths for whatever fate lies ahead. This includes imploring



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Jack Rosati is in his ninth year as director of the Monroe County Children's Center. The Greece resident says his faith has provided a link between him and the youths with whom he works.

them to reverse the lifestyles that landed them in the Children's Center.

He occasionally punctuates his message by sharing some disturbing memorabilia in his office with them.

"I've got a list of kids who did not change. They're dead today," said Rosati, pointing to some papers on his wall. "I've got letters from kids in jail that would make you want to cry, saying, 'I wish I'd listened.'"

During lighter moments, Rosati enjoys using his basketball background to build relationship with youths. A former player at Aquinas Institute and longtime high-school coach in the Rochester area (he was recently named varsity girls' coach at Harley Allendale-Columbia), Rosati employs a "second office" — the Children's Center gymnasium — to engage in jovial pickup games with residents.

One such young person is "Matthew," whose name has been changed for this story to protect his identity. During his seven months at the Children's Center, he and Rosati have squared off in a number of lively one-on-one basketball contests. More importantly, Matthew has learned to place his trust in Rosati and senior child-care worker Sally Sullivan over this time span.

wife, Joanne, and daughter Michelle, 19.

"When they face something like a life sentence, they can become very depressed — feeling they're all alone and there's no hope," Rosati commented. "Spirituality and a belief in God can really become their salvation."

Rosati said he encourages these youths to attend religious services offered by people such as Father Anthony P. Mugavero, the Children's Center chaplain who is also pastor of St. Bridget's Church in Rochester.

In countless instances, Rosati acknowledged, faith has provided the ultimate link between him and the youths with whom he works.

"My compassion is certainly driven by my Catholic faith," Rosati said. "My (childhood) parish, Holy Cross, was all about a sense of community. Holy Cross formed Jack Rosati — that caring for people, not judging."

For this reason, Rosati never hesitates to accommodate the special request frequently made to him by youths as they depart for court or another detention center.

"When they ask me to pray for them, I do," Rosati concluded quietly.

"He did make a change in me," Matthew said of Rosati. "He helps me to care about things when I'm in a bad mood. He's like family now. The only person I was really close to when I came here was my mother. I really never had a male role-model in my life; I didn't know my father."

For Rosati, a huge step is simply to make that initial connection with a troubled child.

"When I can see kids like Matthew smile, that's the success. All the staff can do is plant seeds," Rosati remarked.

Religion often emerges as a chief focus at the Children's Center, Rosati observed.

"God becomes a real important part of our kids' lives — probably more important than it ever has before," said Rosati, who attends Greece's Our Mother of Sorrows Church with his

## Apalachin executive keeps her faith, values on-line

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ENDICOTT — She works frequent 16-hour days, spends three days per week out of town, and has lengthy business trips scheduled for later this year in Europe and the Far East.

She also keeps her family's house in Apalachin, Tioga County, spotless — "You can eat off the floor," she claims — and looks forward to quality time with her husband and two children.

But even with a schedule this crammed, Patricia Hume always makes time to attend church every Sunday. Except for the weekends she's traveling, you can frequently find her serving as a cantor on Sundays at Apalachin's St. Margaret Mary Church.

In her duties as an executive for IBM Corporation, Hume always keeps her Catholic faith in the



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Patricia Hume says her Catholic faith has helped mold her priorities, both at IBM and at home.

forefront — even when she's in a foreign country.

"I cannot do without Mass. Half the time I don't understand the language, but I still go to Mass," she said during a recent interview at the IBM facility in Endicott, Broome County, where her office is located.

Hume's religious beliefs are not just apparent on weekends, either. She wears a crucifix or Immaculate Heart of Mary medal wherever she goes.

"I'm so proud of (my faith) and who I've become because of it," she said.

Hume lives her faith out by employing something that's absent from the vocabulary of many upper-level corporate managers: compassion.

"Having a Christian approach in daily life makes a difference," she said. "Treating others the way you would want to be treated, with kindness and love,

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