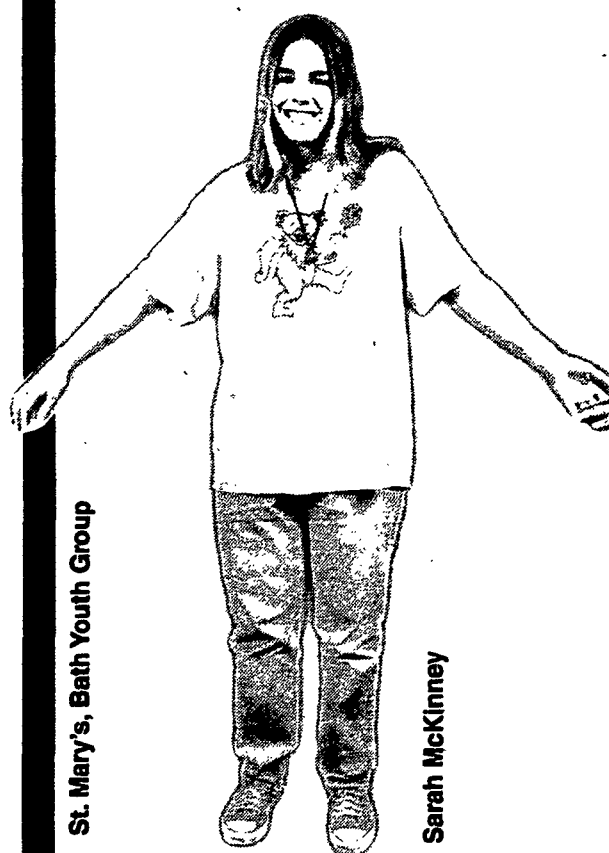


# on the MOVE

## Small-Town Youth Ministry



St. Mary's, Bath Youth Group

Sarah McKinney



Amanda Snyder



Maria Farrell

Tara Anzalone has an emphatic message for the youth of her parish: don't be afraid to live out your Catholic faith!

However, Tara realizes the task is easier said than done — especially because of the environment in which she lives.

"We've never really had a youth group. It's going to be hard in a rural area — small-town people are in cliques and think they're too good for each other, and they bring that to church," said Tara, a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Leicester/St. Lucy Church, Retsof.

The 16-year-old, a junior at York Central High School, explained that many youths are hesitant to become involved in the Livingston County parish because they fear being ridiculed at school.

Though Tara has no such fears — she teaches religious education at the parish and serves on the Diocesan Youth Committee — she noted that her peers usually feel differently.

"A lot of people around here are afraid of not being accepted. Everybody knows each other. There's not really a place you can get away," she said.

Tara's concerns are part of a special

set of considerations that exist for youths in outlying parishes. These issues are also a major focus for Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator of youth ministry. He noted that approximately half of all Catholic churches in the Rochester diocese are classified as rural or small-town.

"In rural areas, you're dealing with much less resources — financial, personnel," Theisen commented.

Theisen added that these youth groups are further challenged by the amount of miles they must cover to attend large-scale events involving other Catholic youth groups.

"If you're in Penn Yan, you might have to go to Geneva or Elmira," he said. The drive to Elmira, for example, would be about 50 miles.

Once a small-town youth ministry is established, Theisen said, it's important for the group to utilize as many resources as

possible within and beyond its parish. He suggested joining up with churches of other denominations within the community, as well as civic groups and Catholic parishes in neighboring areas.

Above all, Theisen, said, these parishes are "very dependent on volunteer adult support."

Adults have helped create a budding success story at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Hamlin. According to parishioner Paul Nagy, 16, an adult youth-ministry team has helped

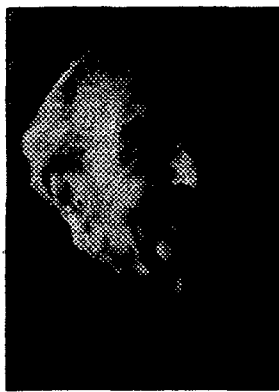
spark renewed interest among young people in the parish. The effort has led to participation from 30 high-school and junior-high youths at Seton, in the northwest corner of Monroe County.

"They try their hardest," Paul said of the parent volunteers. Paul, like Tara, is a Diocesan Youth Committee member.

*"I want to get people interested (in youth ministry) if only they could see how fun it is."  
-Tara Anzalone, 16*

### ★ ★ COMING ATTRACTIONS ★ ★

#### RETIREMENT



Publication Date: May 2  
Adv. Deadline: April 18

This special "golden years" supplement will offer retirement information from the unique perspective provided by Catholic teaching and values. Financial planning, money management, volunteering, travel and health-related issues will be covered.

#### SUMMER GUIDE



Publication Date: May 23  
Adv. Deadline: May 9

As Courier readers prepare for the summer months, this special supplement will present them with a host of activities for their consideration. From nearby church-sponsored festivals and retreats to places beyond, this supplement will serve as a well-used guide.

Advertising in the Catholic Courier reaches more than 85,000 readers in the 12-county Diocese of Rochester each week. By regularly advertising in the Courier, you can reach our readers and show them the products and services you offer.

For more information or to place your ad, call the Courier's advertising department at 716-328-4340.

**Catholic Courier**  
...Because life isn't black & white.

WHY WOULD A  
IN SERVICE TO

WHAT MAKES  
PERSONAL FREE

Life at the

St

W

LISTEN TO THI  
TH  
THEY

Producer Bre  
unpreceden