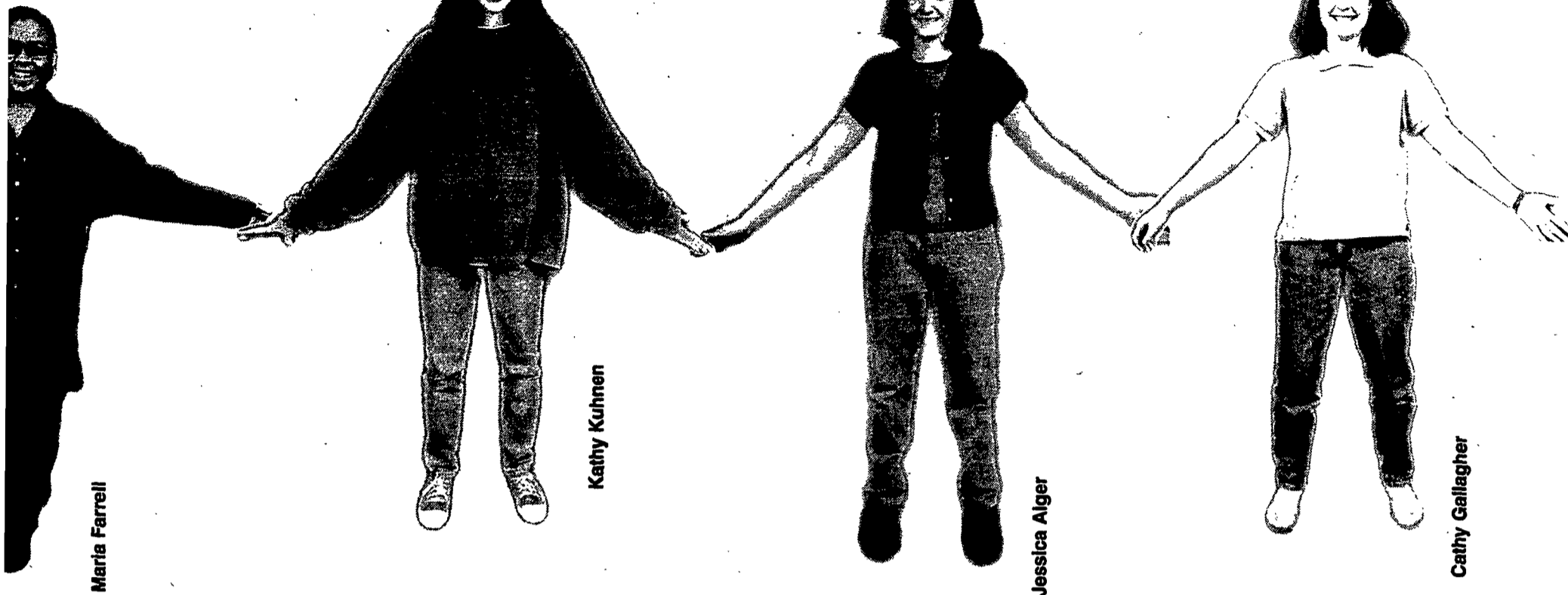


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Story by Staff Writer Mike Latona

Photographs by Staff Photographer S. John Wilkin



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Another promising start is occurring at St. Mary's Church in Bath, Steuben County. Since last month, a group of six teenaged girls have been meeting with adult leader Kathy Donnelly each Wednesday night at the church. The get-togethers, according to youth-group member Cathy Gallagher, provide an opportunity for spiritual sharing. "If someone has a problem, we'll talk about it," Cathy said. Cathy added that the group has also gone to breakfast and the movies together, and plans to stage fund-raising activities that will provide financial support for the youth-ministry program. The Bath parish is hoping to achieve the same firm foundation as the youth program at Sacred Heart Church in Perkinsville, Steuben County. This ministry has operated steadily for several years despite a membership that frequently hovers between nine and 12 youths. "That's about every kid there is in Sacred Heart," remarked Sharon Bricks, youth minister. Bricks is hoping that the youth group can eventually expand its range

of activities by combining with nearby parishes.

"Guest speakers are not going to come to speak to seven or 10 kids," she said. Another advantage of multi-parish events, Bricks added, is that youths' interaction skills tend to improve when they can socialize with peers outside their own parish.

Tara followed this line of thinking in Livingston County. When she found out that a youth Mass was being held this past winter at St. Joseph's Church in Livonia, she convinced a few peers from the Leicester/Retsof parish to attend the Mass with her.

"They said, 'Wow, that was really fun,'" Tara recalled. Positive steps such as these help buoy Tara's hopes that her parish will someday sustain its own youth ministry. Some of those potential members, she noted, could be derived from her own confirmation class that will receive the sacrament on May 15.

"If there is a youth group, I want to help lead it. I want to get people interested," she said. "If only they could see how fun it is."



Tara Anzalone, a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Leicester/St. Lucy's Church, Retsof, has been an active member of the Diocesan Youth Committee.

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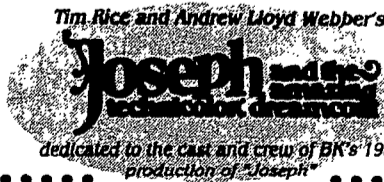
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