

on the MOVE

Story by
Mike Latona

WORKING WITH SENIOR CITIZENS

"They're really cool people"

Early during her first trip to the Hamilton Manor Nursing Home in Greece, Michele Gammariello wondered what she'd gotten herself into.

"I felt kind of nervous inside," recalled Michele, 14. "I didn't expect some of the people to be the way they were. It was scary when you tried to talk to them — either they didn't react, or some of them couldn't talk very well."

However, by the time her visit was over, Michele said, "I wanted to stay."

Michele and other teens from Greece's Holy Name of Jesus Church visited Hamilton Manor on a Saturday in December. During their visit, the teens presented residents with ornaments they had created and sang Christmas carols to them.

"They were really nice. They showed us their rooms; they're really cool people," Michelle remarked. "You could see the disappointment in some of them when we had to leave."

Michele said she is now eagerly awaiting a service project planned by her

religious-education class at Holy Name. Class members plan to bake cakes in the parish center at Easter time, and then deliver them to a senior citizen facility.

Adam Keller is another teen

whose hesitancy quickly changed to enthusiasm. This month, he joined youth-group members from St. James Church in Irondequoit who visited residents at the town's St. Ann's Home.

"At first it was kind of awkward. I wasn't used to being around that many elderly people," said Adam, 12.

However, while assisting nursing home residents during a bingo game, Adam said he became so immersed in the game that his doubts quickly dissolved.

"I started getting more comfortable," remarked Adam, who helped residents find the numbers on their cards and also enjoyed some friendly chatter with them. Adam added that he would like to eventually become a regular volunteer.

Sue D'Ettore, St. Ann's director of therapeutic recreation, said that many teens are regular volunteers through the home's Cadet program, which is open to teens age 14 and up. Several become involved to fulfill school-related community-service requirements.



Anne shares her memories with Kristy.

However, D'Ettore noted that nearly half those teens stay on after completing their obligations. Some, she said, even maintain their bonds with St. Ann's through college.

"You get

the feel of a work experience; it's exposure to the type of profession you might want to go into," D'Ettore explained. "We've had Cadets go into recreation therapy, occupational therapy, social work and physical therapy."

D'Ettore added that personal attachments also motivate teens to stay involved. "You've developed relationships, and you continue to want to see those people," she said.

Kristy Gronska, from St. Mary's Church in Bath, has gained a special friendship with a senior citizen she met two years ago through her involvement with Project CARE. This student group at Haverling High School visits seniors and assists them by shopping and performing maintenance chores at their homes.

Kristy, 17, visits Anne Anderson at her home in Bath once a week. She said their conversations are similar to those she might have with a best friend.

"I'll tell her how my day went. She's kind of like a grandma, real sweet,"

Kristy said. Kristy Anderson — often bakes cookies and arrives.

"She's not fed," Kristy said.

Kristy visits Anne's room at the nursing home.

"A lot of people have interesting things in their lives."

They were alive when they were alive.

"They have a lot of things that you say, that, it's special to them — it seems so."

Ryan Anderson, a senior at Haverling High School, has gained a special friendship with a senior citizen she met two years ago through her involvement with Project CARE.

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Upcoming Supplements

RETIREMENT

Publication Date: March 20 - Deadline: March 6

The approach of the "golden years" is of special interest to Courier subscribers. This special supplement will offer retirement information from the unique perspective provided by Catholic teaching and values. Areas to be covered include financial planning and money management, volunteering as a way of keeping active, travel and health-related issues for seniors.

MILESTONES

Publication Date: April 17 - Deadline: April 3

This third-annual supplement will honor the significant achievements of priests and religious celebrating jubilees of their vocations, and of those who are retiring from active ministry. It will provide biographical sketches of those in the diocese celebrating such milestones, and will focus on their lives as models for others considering vocations.

TRAVEL & PILGRIMAGES

Publication Date: May 15 - Deadline: May 1

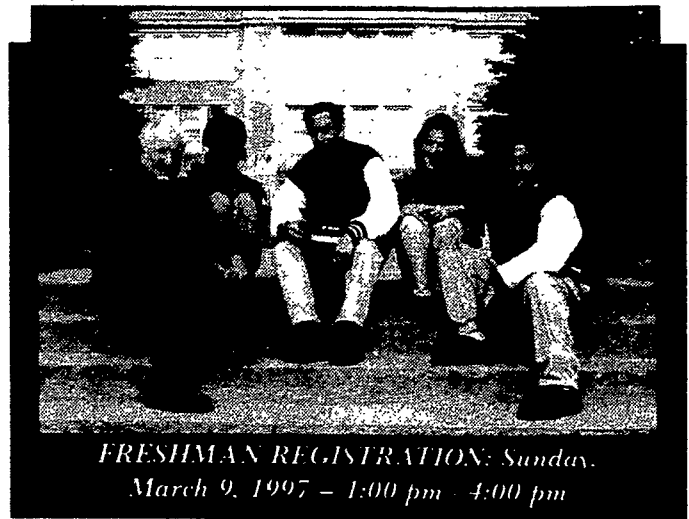
As readers look ahead to summer plans, this supplement will tempt them with choice locations while serving as a planning guide for domestic and foreign journeys. In addition to offering tips for choosing sites and making arrangements, this supplement will highlight shrines and other religious sites of special interest to Catholic travelers.

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