

Photos by Kurt Brownell

WITH ZENS people"



Kristy Gronski, a parishioner at St. Mary's in Bath, has been visiting Anne Anderson in her home weekly for the past two years.

However, more often than not, she is half the age of the teens she meets after completing her volunteer work. Kristy noted that such visits are fulfilling for the volunteers as well as the elderly. "A lot of times, (older people) have these real interesting stories to tell. There might have been great things in history that they were alive for," Kristy said. "They have a historical literacy that you don't have. When you say, 'Wow, I never knew that,' it makes them feel special because they were there — and because you seem so interested."

Kristy said. Kristy added that Anderson — who is in her 80s — often has tea and lemon cookies ready when she arrives. "She makes sure I'm well-fed," Kristy laughed. Kristy noted that such visits are fulfilling for the volunteers as well as the elderly. "A lot of times, (older people) have these real interesting stories to tell. There might have been great things in history that they were alive for," Kristy said. "They have a historical literacy that you don't have. When you say, 'Wow, I never knew that,' it makes them feel special because they were there — and because you seem so interested."

Ryan Vaniga, 15, has acquired a similar education through his volunteer work with residents of St. Ann's Home. "A lot of them talk about their experiences with wars. They were nurses in the wars, and I find that very interesting," said Ryan, who is not affiliated with a Catholic parish. Ryan, who has been a Cadet at St. Ann's Home since last summer, said he gains further fulfillment by knowing his volunteerism is appreciated. "They all say, 'You're so good for doing this.' They're so nice to you, it just makes you feel real happy," he commented. Emily Blake from St. Louis Church in Pittsford is also aware of how much sunshine a young person can take into a nursing home. She has volunteered extensively at the Blossom Nursing Home in Rochester. "Some people were so sick, they couldn't get out of bed. But when you came, they'd say, 'I'm so glad to see you.' They would light up and smile," remarked Emily, 16. Adam's brother, Justin, has received similar feedback in his volunteer efforts with residents of the Brightonian Nursing Home in Brighton. "They really don't get to see people that much, and it brings a smile and joy for them when they see young people," said Justin, 16. Emily emphasized that you don't need an outgoing personality in order to work

effectively with older people. She said that some "are so interested in your being there, you don't even necessarily have to say anything." When interacting with older people, especially those who have problems hearing or understanding, it's important for teens to convey a strong sense of caring, Kristy said. "Keep good eye contact," she suggested. Kristy also said that teens should strive to be "real interested in what they're saying." "My mom said that even if someone says hi to you 10 times, pretend it's the first time, because they forget sometimes," Ryan added. (His mother, Marilyn, is employed in the social-work

office at St. Ann's Home.) More often than not, Adam remarked, both the teens and the seniors ultimately find that their only differences are age-related. "You just have a common bond. As you go along doing stuff with them, you realize they were once the same age as you are — and they like doing the same things you do," Justin pointed out.

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Mission Schedule

All homilies by Fr. Joe Champlin

Saturday, March 8th	Letting Go: The Dark Past
5:00 pm	..Mass
Sunday, March 9th	Letting Go: The Dark Past
8:00, 9:30, 11:30 am	..Mass
Monday, March 10th	Faith and Prayer
9:00 am	..Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	..Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	..Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	..Talk and Evening Prayer
Tuesday, March 11th	Forgiveness & Freedom: Grace & Growth
9:00 am	..Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	..Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	..Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	..Talk and Communal Penance Service
Wednesday, March 12th	Caring About Ourselves
9:00 am	..Mass
11:00 am—12:30 pm	..Private Appointments
3:30—5:30 pm	..Private Appointments
7:30—8:30 pm	..Talk and Evening Prayer followed by a social gathering with refreshments and book signing

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