

On the MOVE

TEACHERS WHO MAKE THE GRADE

You may have been offended, at one time or another, when your teacher seemed exasperated with you and/or the rest of your class.

However, Abby Curatolo is now a bit wiser about the rigors and responsibilities of the profession. After teaching a year's worth of religious education to some rambunctious second-graders, Abby has gotten quite an education about teaching.

Abby, 15, admitted that she will likely pursue another career, due to her lack of one essential attribute: patience.

"I have none. After the first half-hour, all my patience is down the tube," remarked Abby, a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport.

According to teens interviewed for this story, patience is one of many virtues needed to be an effective teacher. Other key ingredients cited include a sense of humor; friendliness; compassion; a willingness to listen; and a desire to go above and beyond the call of duty.

The dedication of David Mulvey impresses Lauren Weber and Peter Eshenour, two of his eighth-grade students at St. Mary's School in Waterloo. Both are also parishioners at St. Mary's Church.

"(Mulvey) does as much as he possibly can," Lauren, 14, commented.

STORY BY

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY

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"He does a lot for the school," agreed Peter, 13. He noted, for example, that Mulvey spent several hours one Saturday to help set up new computers.

Similarly, James Karp admires the commitment of Clay Harris, his math teacher at Dansville High School.

"He takes time out to really sit down and help you. He'd probably stay after almost any day," remarked James, 16, a parishioner at St. Mary's Church in Dansville.

James said many of his peers assume that teachers — especially older ones — are out of touch with the thoughts and feelings of today's teens. But James doesn't feel that's the case with Harris and another Dansville High teacher, biology instructor Gayle Stout.

"They've both been there for over 25 years. They know all the spots to hit and just what to focus on; they know how to motivate you," said James, who is finishing his sophomore year.

Teachers who motivate effectively are also strong communicators, Abby pointed out. She cited Louis Valinoti, an English teacher at Spencerport High School, as a good example.

"He makes eye contact with every student in the room," said Abby, a fresh-

man at Spencerport.

Teachers with strong communication skills, Peter said, are willing to view situations from the students' perspectives.

"They can understand the way you're trying to express yourself, and they listen to what you have to say," Peter said.

Keeping an open mind is important, Peter added, because a teacher is always "dealing with students at different levels of understanding."

Abby pointed out that teachers must clearly demonstrate this sensitivity before students will feel comfortable going to them for help.

"You have to be able to trust a person. They have to be like a friend. The best quality in teachers is if they're friendly," Abby said.

Peter and Lauren in Waterloo would certainly agree with this comment in praising their eighth-grade teacher.

"Mr. Mulvey is a great family friend," Peter said.

"Everybody in my family loves him."

"He's a really good friend," Lauren agreed. "It's great if a teacher is your friend."

Indeed, many times a strong rapport between student and teacher can blossom into a friendship that endures long after the student moves on. Abby noted that she often returns to St. John the Evangelist School to visit Sally Wilcox, who served as her kindergarten and fifth-

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EDUCATION

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Publication Date: September 18 - Deadline: September 4

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