

MOVIE on the

STORY BY MIKE LATONA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
GREG FRANCIS

Young and v

You might be able to pick up a brochure on AIDS. But meeting and talking with someone who has the HIV virus — and lives daily with the dread of developing AIDS — is another matter.

That's what youths from Rochester's Sacred Heart and Holy Rosary parishes did when they attended a seminar at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Oct. 26.

There, they met Ken Hudson, a member of the speakers' bureau for AIDS Rochester, Inc. Hudson began addressing teens on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention after he was diagnosed in March with the HIV virus.

Hudson said that he targets his seminars toward teens and young adults because they are among the most likely candidates for becoming HIV-infected.

"Fifty percent of the new HIV cases are with people under 25 years old, and 25 percent are under 20. When you're young, you don't think about the long-term," remarked Hudson, 25. "It's important to reach out to youth. I myself am young, and I probably got this (HIV) when I was young."

The HIV infection often leads to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), for which there is no known cure. Statistics provided by Randy Sundquist, public health trainer and educator for the Monroe County Department of Health, revealed that 1,706 cases of AIDS — 1,365 in males and 341 in females — had been reported in a nine-county area within the Rochester Diocese between 1992 and Sept. 30, 1997.

Among those people, 982 were known to have died. The statistics also indicated that 51.9 percent of the male cases were contracted through homosexual activity and 29.1 percent through injected drug use. For women, the highest rates were through drug injection (51.9 percent) and heterosexual contact (32.3 percent).

Hudson conducted his seminar at Sacred Heart with AIDS Rochester prevention coordinator Wendy Pettrone. According to Sacred Heart youth coordinator Gail McElligott, Hudson's talk was enthusiastically received by the 23 teens who attended.

"He talked about how society reacted to him, and how facing death brought him closer to God," McElligott said. "The kids had so many questions."

Sacred Heart's Kyle Knitter said he did not discriminate against Hudson because of his disease, and that he valued the information Hudson and Pettrone shared



Ken Hudson, who is HIV-positive, speaks locally for AIDS Rochester, to put a human

"It only takes

about HIV and AIDS.

"The more we know about it, the more we can prevent it," Kyle, 15, remarked.


McElligott added that she was thankful Hudson and Pettrone reflected Catholic teaching by citing sexual abstinence as the best way to avoid the HIV virus.

Hudson — who is gay and was raised Catholic — does not go into explicit detail about his sexual background during his seminars. However, in an interview with the *Catholic Courier*, he admitted that he did not practice abstinence in earlier years.

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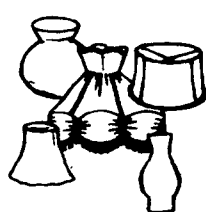
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