

Men's group funds duo's 'mission' to Space Camp

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

ROCHESTER — Eric Shey has long been interested in space.

"Sometimes I just look up at the stars and it just gives me a feeling," said the sixth-grader at Rochester's St. Boniface School.

Meanwhile, classmate Ken Pinckney has studied the sky with his own telescope.

"I've seen the shadows on the moon," he reported.

Both dream of possibly being astronauts someday.

Today, Eric and Ken are getting a closer look at what that dream might involve.

The two were spending May 2-8 at the U.S. Space Camp in Titusville, Fla., one of three such camps operated by the U.S. Space and Rocket Center (the other sites are at Huntsville, Ala. — the center's headquarters — and San Jose, Cal.)

During the week, Eric and Ken were to visit the Kennedy Space Center, trying on space suits, building and launching model rockets, sampling astronaut food and joining teams conducting a simulated space shuttle mission.

St. Boniface Men's Club is sponsoring the trip, and put up the \$2,200 the boys needed to take part. The club has sponsored two students from the school each year since 1990.

The length of that commitment is unusual, acknowledged Ed Davis, Space Camp's media relations manager.

"There are schools that send children every year," Davis said in a telephone interview from Huntsville. "But nine years is in the upper echelon in the number of years that you are doing it."

The idea to send St. Boniface students to the camp came from Ed Sloan, the club's vice president for youth activities. He learned about the camp and took the idea of sponsoring students to the club.

The club uses a portion of the receipts from such fundraisers as an annual spaghetti dinner and a raffle to help pay for the students, Sloan explained.

The Space Camp competition is open to fifth- and sixth-graders at St. Boniface School. The entrants write essays about why they want to go to the camp.

In his essay Eric wrote, "I would like to be part of the glory of being an astronaut someday."

Still, he was not certain he would win.

"I thought I wasn't going to," Eric acknowledged. "My essay was only the front of the page, but Kenny's was three pages."

Ken, with his three pages, admitted, "I already had a good feeling that I had a good chance."

In his essay, Ken said that if "chosen I would faint." But he didn't faint when he found out he had indeed won. Rather, he "started dancing."

When they come back, they will report about their experiences to the students at St. Boniface. They will also have personalized videos to share — ones that highlight their involvement.

Both look forward to the fun — and the work — at the camp. Meanwhile, they said the experience might help ready them for possible careers.

"In the future I hope to become an astronomer and use my skills, if chosen, to help me," Ken wrote in his essay.

"Someday," Eric declared, "I might like to be an astronaut, and this might prepare me well for it."



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Cooking up a centennial

Volunteer Gerry Murty cooks spaghetti for a dinner held May 1 by St. Augustine Church in the cafeteria of Flower City School, Ernestine Street, Rochester. St. Augustine's Centennial Committee raised about \$780 toward the parish's centennial celebration, scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 18. Some 235 people attended the dinner.

Recognizing

★ Bishop Matthew H. Clark has been named to Rochester Mayor William Johnson's Stewardship Council. The council will help to oversee implementation of Rochester Renaissance 2010, a plan intended to guide city development in the coming 12 years.

★ Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, president of St. Bernard's Institute, will be the commencement speaker for Nazareth College's 1998 graduate students May 9. Sister Schoelles is a graduate of the college.

★ Maribeth Mancini, director of the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, was elected to the board of directors of the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership, at the conference's annual meeting April 26-30 in Milwaukee.

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