

PARENTING



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Sue Bader, left, and Thea Thompson put pigtails in 13-year-old Sarah Bader's hair before she goes skiing. The women were among several parent volunteers at Bristol Mountain with Brighton's Siena Catholic Academy Ski Club on Feb. 11.

Parent-volunteers crucial, schools say

By Rob Cullivan
Staff Writer

If you want your favorite Catholic school-teachers to sleep well at night, do one thing — volunteer to help out around the schools at which they teach.

They need your help, noted Patty Cost, mother of two children at Seton Catholic, a pre-K-6 school located at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Brighton. On Feb. 9, Cost was helping sixth-graders like her son, Gus, sew winter hats after school to be sold to benefit Flower City Habitat for Humanity. The organization builds housing for low-income people. Cost didn't mince words when describing the scenario she envisioned if parents didn't help teachers with such projects.

"I can just imagine what a nightmare it would be, so I came in," she said. "If the kids want to do an exciting project, they need more adults."

Sixth-grade teacher Pat Bertucci couldn't agree more about the need for parent volunteers.

"I would never attempt to sew with 43 kids in a project with 100 hats without parental support," Bertucci said.

Not to mention the fact that it gives kids like Gus a chance to be with their parents in a school setting. He summed up that point with these words:

"It's good because you kind of know her more than some other people," he said of his mother.

Not only is it comforting that a child like Gus retains a special affection for his mother, it's also comforting to the parent-volunteers that they build bonds with their offspring, according to Mary Muggleton. She has two children at Seton, Stephen Strauss, in sixth grade, and Matthew Strauss, in first grade, and offers her help as a volunteer.

"It's a good way to see what's going on in the school and check in with your child," Muggleton said. "It's fun to work with all the kids to see how they're doing and help them along."

Catholic schools simply couldn't run



Tony DeVeto, 6, skates back and forth between the legs of his mom, Arleen DeVeto, at a rollerskating party at Henrietta's Good Shepherd School on Feb. 10.

without parent volunteers like Cost and Muggleton, according to Timothy W. Dwyer, the Diocese of Rochester's superintendent of schools.

"One of the special parts of our schools is that we expect a strong partnership with parents not only in the academic progress of their kids, but also in the life of the school," he said.

He added that financially pressed Catholic schools need the volunteer labor parents often provide.

"They do a lot of the things that otherwise we would have to pay for," he said, pointing out, for example, that public school teachers have to pay lunchroom supervisors whereas Catholic schools rely on volunteers.

"That's one of the things that helps to keep the cost of tuition down," he added.

That point was seconded in the autumn 1999 newsletter of St. Margaret Mary's School of Irondequoit, pre-K-6. Parents assist teachers in classes, raise funds, and built two new playgrounds, wrote Bonnie Deninger and Mary Beth Place, co-chairs of the home-school association.

Another active volunteer is Sue Passero-Colombo, whose daughter, Deanna, 8, attends St. Ambrose School, also in Ironde-



Patty Cost, a parent-volunteer, helps sixth-graders line up material on a sewing machine Feb. 8 at Brighton's Seton Catholic School. The class was making fleece hats to sell to raise money for Habitat for Humanity.

quoit, and whose son, Brandon, 13, attends Siena Catholic Academy, which houses grades seven and eight and is at St. Thomas More Parish, Brighton. Passero-Colombo serves on the Monroe County Catholic School Board and on the St. Ambrose School Advisory Committee. She also organizes ski club trips for Siena students.

"It's fun to get to know the kids," she said. "I think it's important for kids to be used to having their parents around. I give them their space, but I just like to know what they're doing."

She added that Catholic schools are dependent on parent volunteers for practical reasons.

"It's important to keep some of our budget items down," she said.

On that note, Rita McCarthy, a parent volunteer at Good Shepherd School in Henrietta, pointed out that it takes a lot of donated labor to run the pre-K-6 institution.

"They need everything from helping out in the lunchroom to stuffing envelopes," she said. Her daughter Allison is in sixth grade, and her son Jack is in preschool.

In addition to listening to students read books out loud and monitoring the lunchroom, McCarthy oversees the school's roller-skating parties that are held three times a year, including the most recent one on Feb. 11. She said her mother, Kathleen Dean, was a volunteer at Guardian Angels School in Henrietta when she was going there as a child and the example made an impression.

"You get that big fuzzy feeling seeing her in the building," McCarthy said of her mother. "I want Allison to have that feeling, too."

Events

© FRI, FEB. 18 — Concert: "Music of Duke Ellington", Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Hochstein School of Music Performance Hall, 50 N. Plymouth Ave., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; free; first-come, first-seated; doors open 7 p.m.

© SAT, FEB. 19 — Program: "Wild Wings", stories, conservation, bird of prey demos, Helen McGraw Branch, Irondequoit Public Library, 2180 E. Ridge Rd., Irondequoit; 2 p.m.; to register call 716/336-6060.

© FEB. 19, 20 — Program: "Winter Wonderland", family fun, crafts, refreshments, Gary the Happy Pirate; Sat. 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m.; Sun. 1, 3 p.m., Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; included with museum admission; adults \$6; students \$5; children (3-17) \$4; 716/263-2700.

© SUN, FEB. 20 — Tryouts for Western New York Women's Basketball Club AAU National Travel Team, for grades 7-11; Finger Lakes Community College Field House; \$15 tryout registration fee; for pre-registration form call Linda Wright, 607/243-7000.

© SUN, FEB. 20 — Concert: live music by Brian and Chad Ayers, RM SC Cumming Nature Center, 6472 Gulick Rd., Naples; 1-3 p.m.; free with Nature Center admission; 716/374-6160.

© MON, FEB. 21 — Storyteller: Sankofa-David Anderson, African American tales and legends; ages 5-adult; Secret Room, Children's Center, Central Library, 115 South Ave., Rochester; 7 p.m.; 716/428-8150.

© FEB. 21-25 — Family fun: School Break Week-Fun in the Forecast, weather-related activities, magician Jerry Argetsinger 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; create a windsock, rainbow art, Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; free with museum admission; 716/263-2700.

© FEB. 21-25 — Performance: "Meet Rochester's Abolitionists", Rochester Museum and Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester; 9:30, 10:30 a.m., 1-2 p.m.; free with museum admission; 716/271-4552, ext. 379.


© FEB. 21, MAR. 1 — Information sessions: Girl Scout camp; Feb. 21: STAR West, 26 Harvester Ave., Batavia; Mar. 1: Metro STAR, 755 Culver Rd., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; for a free copy of Summer Opportunities brochure call 716/292-5160.

© WED, FEB. 23 — Cool Kids on Campus: "Children's African Drum and Dance Troupe", Fireside Lounge, off Residence Dr., Seymour Union, SUNY Brockport; 7 p.m.; free; open to public; 716/637-3984.

© WED, FEB. 23 — Program: "The Earthling", basic information about the environment; for grades K-3; Kate Gleason Auditorium, Bausch & Lomb Building, Central Library, 115 South Ave., Rochester; 2 p.m.; no registration required; 716/428-8150.

© FEB. 27, MAR. 4, 5 — Children's Theatre: "Winnie-the-Pooh", Rochester Children's Theatre, 45 Prince St., Rochester; Mar. 4, 11, 18 at 11 a.m., 2 p.m.; Feb. 27, Mar. 5, 12, 19 at 2, 4 p.m.; adults \$10/\$11, students/seniors \$8/\$9; 716/271-7870.

© TUE, FEB. 29 — Leap Year Program: froggy games, crafts, activities, Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; free with museum admission; 716/263-2700.



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