

The what, whys and hows of On The Move

We've featured cheerleaders and athletes. Teens with developmental disabilities and life-threatening diseases. People who are excited about their teen years and their Catholic faith. Some who struggle to get through each day.

All these people have a common, accepted place: right here in On the Move.

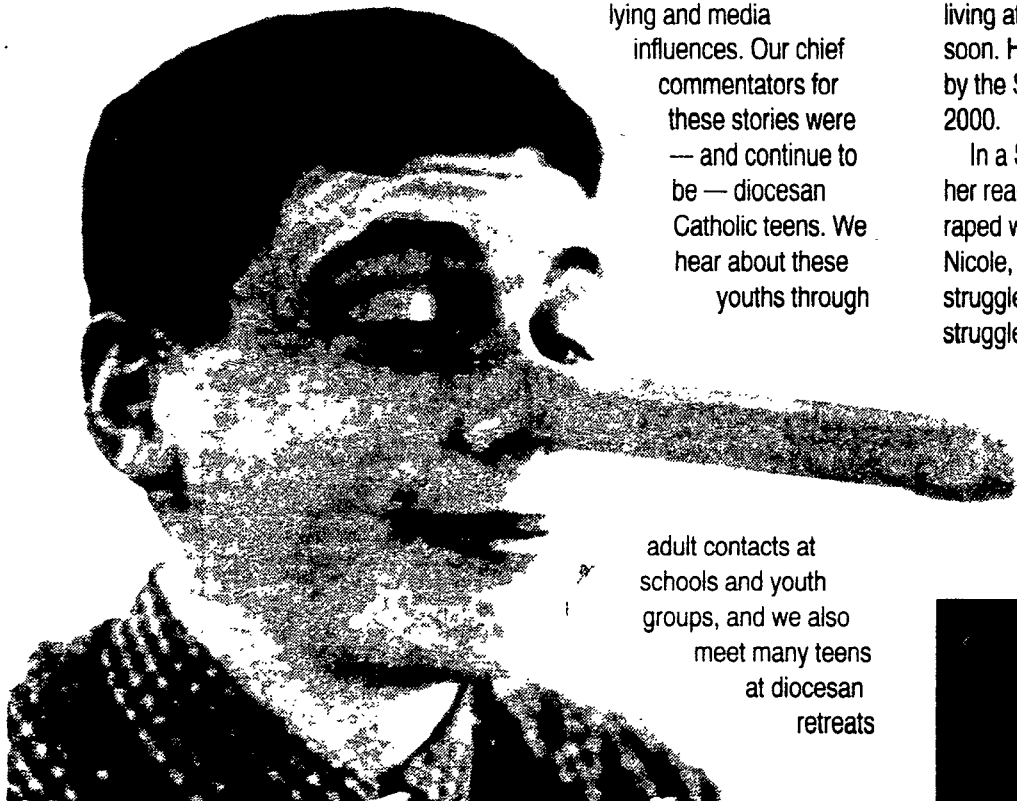
Did you ever wonder how our subjects come to life on this page? Since this month is national Catholic Press Month, we thought it would be a good time to tell you the history of On the Move and why it's such an important part of our newspaper.

Youth coverage has long been a part of the *Catholic Courier*. Starting in the 1970s, the then-*Courier-Journal* began the "Rap-Around" page, which focused exclusively on the Catholic high schools in the diocese. "Rap-Around" was eliminated for budgetary reasons about a decade later. Then in 1985, the *Courier* reinstated weekly youth coverage of both Catholic high schools and parish youth groups, as well as a sports page that emphasized high-school coverage.

The *Catholic Courier* dropped weekly sports coverage in the fall of 1995 in response to overwhelming opinion expressed in a survey of readers, and the teen page was reformulated to focus on issues and individuals as well as schools and youth groups. The new page emphasized eye-catching graphics, and was renamed "On the Move."

OTM stories became more topical in nature as we debated such subjects as school dress codes, swearing, lying and media influences. Our chief commentators for these stories were — and continue to be — diocesan Catholic teens. We hear about these youths through

adult contacts at schools and youth groups, and we also meet many teens at diocesan retreats



File photo illustration for story on lying.

**Story
by
Mike
Latona**

and conventions. Although an occasional junior-high or college student is featured, On the Move is predominately a page for high schoolers.

We still run occasional sports features in On the Move. Last August, in fact, we traveled to Newark Valley (Tioga County), Binghamton and Geneva for sports-related pieces. Those journeys also illustrate our attempts to be as geographically diverse as possible for On the Move stories — no simple task when your regular coverage area spans 12 counties, more than 7,000 square miles,

150-plus churches and seven Catholic high schools.

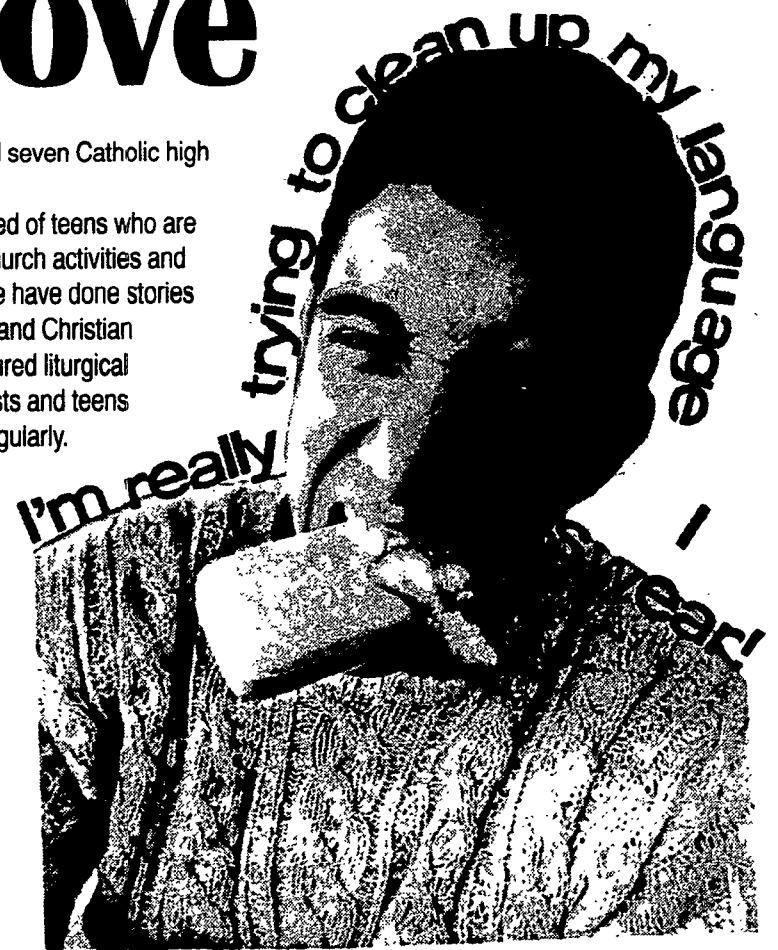
Stories have emerged of teens who are alive in their faith, in church activities and community service. We have done stories on ecumenical events and Christian rockers. We have featured liturgical dancers, pro-life activists and teens who pray the rosary regularly.

Every once in a while, we get a chance to catch up with some folks who were formerly featured in On the Move. Some of them include Anne Kidera, the first-year youth minister at Church of Good Shepherd in Henrietta; Rob Stevens, now a college freshman whom we just revisited last month for his views on the priesthood; and Kate Rickard, a sophomore at Connecticut's Fairfield University who this year started a discussion group, S.O.S. (Sharin' Our Stories), through her campus ministry.

Some roads have been bumpy. For instance, Ryan McKee was profiled in a December 1999 story after a drunken-driving accident nearly claimed his life. Though still affected by brain damage suffered in the crash, Ryan, 18, is doing well these days, living at home and hoping to begin a job soon. He was awarded an honorary degree by the Spencerport High School Class of 2000.

In a September 1999 article, "Nicole" (not her real name) shared her story of being raped when she was 14. Since that time Nicole, who was raised Catholic, has struggled with depression, drugs and family struggles. She now describes herself as "drug free, alcohol free and tight with the Most High." Nicole, now 17, is seven months pregnant and engaged to be married.

Nicole's story, obviously, touched on situations that don't



File photo illustration for story on swearing

jibe with church teachings. That's not uncommon for On the Move, which often provides a forum for examining controversial subjects and what the Catholic Church and Catholic teens have to say about them. We have also delved into suicide, teen pregnancy, attitudes toward gays and racism. We interviewed a young, HIV-positive man. We discussed the influence of the TV show "South Park." Our reputation for exploring tough subjects is known around the country: The *Catholic Courier* received a first-place national award from the Catholic Press Association for a May 1999 feature on taunting.

Though our subjects range far and wide, perhaps there's still one of interest to you that we haven't covered yet — or that's now due for an update! If so, let us know. On the Move's regular writer is Mike Latona, who has written for the *Catholic Courier* since 1991. He'd love your feedback! You can contact him at mlatona@catholiccourier.com

COMING NEXT WEEK:

DATING AND VIOLENCE



File photo for story on prayer