

Program enhances teen leadership

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — Ann-Margaret Wise is an ideal example of why the title "FutureNow" is used for diocesan leadership training sessions for teens.

In the future, Ann-Margaret figures she'll need to be a solid leader if she realizes her goal of becoming a missionary doctor in Africa. "It's going to be imperative in helping as many people as we can," she said.

But she can't afford to wait until adulthood to start polishing those leadership skills. Ann-Margaret said daily interaction with her peers calls for those same qualities; she often serves as a confidante on such serious issues as drug and sexual abuse, relationship problems, and suicide.

"Sometimes people need help and guidance who are lost. If you show leadership skills they might come to you," said Ann-Margaret, a parishioner at Our Lady of Mercy in Greece.

Ann-Margaret was among 51 high-school students who attended the FutureNow program June 25-26 at Holy Cross Church in Charlotte. The 12-hour, two-day training serves to make teens better leaders in their parishes, schools and communities. With instruction by nine diocesan youth ministers, the program covers leadership skills in the areas of communication; leadership styles; program planning; prayer and worship; team building and decision making; presentation skills; group dynamics; and spirituality and personal growth.

Lots of tips on presentation skills



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Katie Nowak (center), a parishioner of Irondequoit's Christ the King Church, laughs June 26 with others participating in a group-dynamics workshop at Holy Cross Church in Charlotte. The workshop was part of the FutureNow teen leadership training program.

emerged from a June 26 workshop led by Donna Gray, youth minister at Greece's St. Lawrence Parish. Gray and several teens discussed the importance of body language; not talking fast; being prepared; eye contact; confidence; enthusiasm; using humor; using examples from personal experiences; and employing visual props.

Lively discussion emerged during

Youth

a group dynamics workshop led by Cindy Lazzaro, faith formation coordinator at Hamlin's St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. Lazzaro stressed the need to verbalize a person's first name repeatedly, saying, "The more often you use someone's name, the more likely they are to participate."

"I never really thought about that before, but it's true. It's the little things like that," said Mike Philippon, 16.

During that workshop Mike noted the delicate balance involved in leading his own peers, saying teens tend to rebel when ordered around by someone their own age.

"Being liked by the people you lead is definitely important. But if there's a situation I'm in where safety is concerned, I would not be so lighthearted," he told the *Catholic Courier*. Mike is on the student council at Irondequoit High School, where he recently finished his sophomore year. He recently won his school's HOBY youth leadership award and is also the youth representative on parish council at Irondequoit's Christ the King Parish.

Ann-Margaret, also, is involved in

numerous school and community organizations, including leadership roles for junior-high youth groups at both Our Lady of Mercy and Holy Name of Jesus in Greece. FutureNow, she said, gives her a chance to analyze in-depth how she conducts herself in those positions.

"This is really the only formal training I've had for leadership, which is really nice," said Ann-Margaret, a junior-to-be at Hilton High School.

FutureNow has been attended by several hundred high-school youths since its inception in 1998. It has been held in several parts of the diocese, including five straight years as a summer overnight event at Holy Cross.

Following the first day of workshops June 25, participants attended 5:20 p.m. Mass at Holy Cross and then strolled down to Ontario Beach Park for dinner and a concert along Lake Ontario.

Late nighttime included card-playing and video-watching — along with what teens seem to do best at sleepovers: not sleep. Ann-Margaret laughingly admitted to getting about three hours of sleep.

"I had an awesome time hanging out, staying up with the girls talking 'til all hours," she said.

Mr. Dominic's

WISHING YOU & YOUR FAMILY A
SAFE & HAPPY
4TH OF JULY HOLIDAY

Smoke-free, dining room
(off street parking available)
Delicious appetizers, soups,
veal dishes, vegetarian, chicken,
fish, and homemade pasta

10% Senior Discount
on regular priced dinners with this ad!

Lunch: Tues.-Fri. 11-2
Dinners Daily
from 4:00 - 9:00 p.m.

4699 Lake Ave.
(585) 865-4630
www.mrdominics.com
Gift Certificates Available

IT'S TIME *to get*
COMFORTABLE

We deliver comfort

Roth Residential
HEATING & COOLING
Division Leo J. Roth Corp.

841 Holt Road **YORK**
Rochester NY
585-872-0220

Serving the Catholic Diocese
of Rochester for 55 Years