



Leila Navidi/Catholic Courier

Christine Bauman, a member of the tournament racing team at Irondequoit's Point Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department Explorer Post 667, sets up a hose before a drill.

Contest lights teenager's fire

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

IRONDEQUOIT — Christine Bauman describes herself as a low-key person. But get her talking about her volunteer firefighting activities, and the 18-year-old's adrenaline really starts pumping.

Tops among Christine's interests is her membership on Point Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department Explorer Post 667's tournament racing team. That squad, which competes against other fire departments in the Rochester area and beyond, has achieved dynasty status: it's won the western New York championship for six years straight.

Post 667 takes part in numerous racing competitions throughout the summer. Points are awarded based on how quickly and accurately each team can perform such drills as connecting hoses; directing water at targets; and, in honoring firefighting techniques from an earlier generation, transporting buckets of water.

Christine has an obvious love for competition: a recent graduate of Aquinas Institute, she was involved in tennis, basketball and softball. But she says it was her involvement with Explorers that helped the most in developing confidence and assertiveness. In fact, Christine eventually became captain and president of Post 667.

"It's easier to lead people when you know them," she said as she flipped through a thick album con-

taining action and group photos of Post 667 from past competitions.

Being part of the racing team involves quite a commitment: Christine often spends at least two evenings and one weekend day per week taking part in drills and competitions. The bulk of that time is spent at the two Point Pleasant fire houses — on Point Pleasant Road and on Kings Highway, both in Irondequoit.

"I fell in love with the people there," she said, recalling her initial involvement with the fire department as a 14-year-old. "I just really enjoy being down there. The people are really nice, always inviting."

Christine is now in her fifth year with the Explorers, a program of the Boy Scouts of America that's open to high-school boys and girls. Explorers pursue such trades as emergency service, law enforcement, auto mechanics and other areas where they can get a hands-on feel for the profession. Through Post 667 Christine has learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation and has given presentations to young children about fire safety. She is also permitted to assist at minor fires.

Christine will attend SUNY College at Oswego this fall, majoring in graphic design. During the summers she plans to pursue becoming an adult member of the Point Pleasant Fire Department, which requires extra training and being voted in by department members. Although she doubts she would pur-



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Christine takes part in a hose drill Aug. 3 during a competition in Spencerport. Christine and her team placed first in the event.

Youth

sue the special training required to fight fires from close range, Christine noted that fire-department members can also contribute by working the pump or driving the fire truck.

Christine's spirit of community service does not stop at the fire department. At St. Salome Parish in Irondequoit, she has frequently designed posters that get displayed around church. She has also helped pack Christmas baskets and volunteered for the annual children's Halloween party.

"Christine has been quietly doing things for others for many years ... (she) is a valuable member of our community and a wonderful example for other teens in our parish," wrote Donna Moll, St. Salome's religious-education administrator, in nominating Christine for the diocesan Hands of Christ Award. The honor is given annually to high-school seniors for outstanding service in their church, school and community. Christine received her award last fall.

Along with her fire-department and church involvement, Christine said she also busies herself doing

lawn work for neighbors near her Seneca Road home. She attributes these traits to her father, David, who got her started in parish volunteer duty as a young child; and mother, Mary Ellen, whom Christine said is constantly "behind the scenes, cooking for people."

"I really enjoy helping people out. I find joy in helping people," Christine stated. "That's what I've always been taught, to help others."

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