

# Freshmen adjust to fresh settings

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — For most of the day Sept. 2, rain and gray skies threatened to force indoors Nazareth Academy's welcoming picnic for freshmen.

However, just as a ninth-grader's fears and apprehensions often give way to sunny experiences, the clouds dissipated and a late-afternoon wiener roast proceeded smoothly on the high school's south lawn.

The party was a hit, attracting more than 200 people: 55 of the school's 90 incoming freshmen and their families, along with faculty members and Nazareth upperclassmen who served as volunteers. Many of the guests also ventured indoors for tours of the Nazareth facility.

An especially popular stop was the school bookstore, where a brisk business was taking place for clothing with Nazareth Academy logos. One satisfied customer was freshman Ashley DiVincenzo ... well, the actual customer was Ashley's mother Janine, who was doling out some serious bucks at the cash register. Ashley's haul included a gym uniform, two shirts, pants and a sweatshirt — a wardrobe she said she planned to utilize extensively during the first week of school.

"She's so excited. You've got to make sure she has everything," her mother explained, adding with a smile, "And I have a hard time saying no."

According to Lou Zona, principal, the picnic brought back a one-time popular tradition at Nazareth Academy that had not been done in recent years.

"We're really working hard to connect with the freshmen and their families as soon as possible," said Zona, in his second year at the all-girls' high school. Zona explained that by offering a freshman picnic and tour just before school began

## Youth

"it's not a mystery when they come here tomorrow," referring to Sept. 3, the first day of classes.

"I think it's pretty cool," Ashley said of the festivities.

Bernie Eichas, who emerged from the bookstore with a Nazareth shirt, was also enjoying the event, saying she had spied some familiar faces. "It's good to see my friends before school starts," remarked Bernie, 13, from St. Jude's Parish in Gates.

Having friends around will help ease some freshman jitters that Bernie admitted to harboring. "I'm a little nervous. There's going to be more work," she said. "And there's a lot of people I don't know. I don't know if I'm going to get to know all their names."

Ashley, on the other hand, seemed to be taking things in stride — including the extra distance she will travel from her home in Penfield. A parishioner of St. Joseph's in Penfield, she attended St. Joseph's School last year.

"It doesn't really bother me," Ashley said about the long bus rides. "I'll just bring my CD player."

For freshmen who aren't feeling quite as positive, Zona said that's perfectly natural. He acknowledged that the transition to high school can be a bit slow, citing an all-female atmosphere that's new for virtually everyone; students who are converging from all parts of the city and its suburbs; and a notably tougher curriculum than in middle school.

"We're a college preparatory school. They have to hit the ground running," Zona said, adding that these challenges apply even for the 40 percent of freshmen who attended school in the Nazareth Academy building last year as eighth-graders at Nazareth Hall. (Nazareth Hall, a grades pre-K through 8 coeduca-



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

The day before classes resumed for the year, Rochester's Nazareth Academy held a welcoming picnic for incoming freshmen. Ashley DiVincenzo, shown completing a writing exercise in her English class Sept. 5, was among the freshmen who participated.

tional school, holds grades 6 through 8 at Nazareth Academy.)

Freshman Dorina Agostinelli, who attended Nazareth Hall last year, said she's already anticipating a tussle with academics based on feedback from her sister Christina, 17, a Nazareth Academy senior.

"I'm kind of nervous about all the work. I'm taking a new language, going from Spanish to Latin," Dorina, 14, said during the picnic.

Her sister, seated next to her, had some quick advice: "Do your homework the day it's assigned — it builds up fast!"

[www.CatholicCourier.com](http://www.CatholicCourier.com)

Now offering more news and features:

- daily World & Nation news updates
- reviews of nearly 200 popular films
- an archive of "Along the Way" columns by Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

# Ta

Paula Doyl

MISSION: minican S... rects a dis... dence Holy... Mission Hi...

Sister W... removal c... bers, pun... felons, pro... in the Los /... change the... ble signs of...

It is conc... being and... brought Sis... she thought... third, and l...

"In the ti... pital, we se... violence,"... who previc... partnership... reach prog... Before that... and a colleg...

With \$25... nated by th... the top-of-t... pulse laser... ganizer and... to business.

"This pro... and serve... Wilkerson t... per of the L...

"About the... their mid-20... are a barrie... a hard time... promoted.

gang, but n... of the tattoo...

The proje... from becom... violence be...

L

A

Disc

Indep

Visit u

our intr