

East meets West, North meets South at academy

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

If the United Nations ever runs out of room in New York City, it could open a branch in Bloomfield Hills.

The interpreters are already there — at the Academy of the Sacred Heart. Among the academy students are several from countries around the world. Collectively, they speak at least 10 languages and possibly more.

These include French, German, Spanish, Italian, Persian, Korean and others.

The international aspect of the academy has grown increasingly during the past few years, according to Sister Susan Maxwell, headmistress.

Most of the students who speak foreign tongues have attended Sacred Heart schools in other parts of the world. In many instances, mothers of the students are Sacred Heart alumnae from around the world also.

"WE HAVE students from Chile, India, Peru, Belgium, Cairo and the Philippines," Sister Maxwell said.

One father is a professor at the University of Detroit, others are with the auto companies, doctors and in other professions.

The international atmosphere in Bloomfield Hills is "more true here than at other academies," Sister Maxwell said. She recently attended a meeting of representatives from three Sacred Heart provinces (Chicago, Washington and New York).

"Except for Washington, D.C., we were by far the most international," she said.

One of the students, Sophie Henry from Vichy, France, is attending Sacred Heart on an exchange program.

The academy also has an exchange program within the United States where students can attend another Sacred Heart school in a city of their choosing.

"THE MAJORITY of exchanges are in this country," Sister Maxwell said.

"Manhattan, Houston or San Francisco are much more usual."

Students who attend another Sacred Heart school within the United States usually go for a tri-semester, or one third of the year. Those who participate in an overseas exchange go for a longer period of time.

Participation in an exchange, either in the United States or abroad, "has a very positive effect on college applications," Sister Maxwell said.

In addition to Sophie Henry, who is living with the Ray White family in Birmingham, students who are contributing to the international atmosphere at Sacred Heart in Bloomfield Hills this winter include Puran Ramin from Iran, a freshman living with her brother in Birmingham, and Fiorella Paternostro from Colombia, living with the Irvin Swider family in Birmingham.

By the end of this month, Joe Hee and Ji Hee Chang, seventh grade twins from Seoul, Korea, will arrive to stay with Mrs. Louis Park of Bloomfield Hills.

Puran, 15, lived with a sister in Italy for three years before coming to Michigan. Fiorella's family moved to Panama from Colombia recently. Her sister graduated from the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Bloomfield Hills in 1978.

The twins' mother attended the Sacred Heart in Seoul.

Other academy students whose families now live in the area are:

• Amelie von Wiedebach from Germany, freshman daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eicke von Veltheim of Grand Blanc.

• Karen Rayner from South Africa, seventh grade daughter of the Brian Rayners of Birmingham.

• Sophie, Mariette and Charlotte van de Kerckhoff from Belgium, 10th, ninth and seventh grade daughters of the Jacques van de Kerckhoffs of Bloomfield Hills.

• Andrea Krick from Germany, fifth

grade daughter of the Horst Kricks of Bloomfield Hills.

Mariana (fourth), Claudia (third), Ursula (third), Valeria (first) and Pablo (kindergarten) Petrozzi from Lima, Peru, children of Dr. and Mrs. Carlos Petrozzi of Bloomfield Hills. Their mother attended Sacred Heart in Lima.

• Marianne (first) and Jeanette (kindergarten) Hilgert from Lima, Peru, have just come from the American School in Mexico City. Their parents are Mr. and Mrs. Jan L. Hilgert and their mother attended Sacred Heart in Lima, Peru.

• Gena Gibbs from Nassau, Bahamas, first grade daughter of the Harold E. Gibbs of Southfield.

• Alpina (fourth) and Rahul (kindergarten) Bafna from India, daughters of Dr. and Mrs. Shalibhadra Bafna of Bloomfield Hills.

• Helene Kemper from France, fourth grade daughter of the Yves Kemper of Birmingham.

• Moushira Maaraba, from Egypt, seventh grade daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Ahmad S. Maaraba of Troy, Moushira was born in London, England.

• Angelique Lele from India but was born in Ireland. Her mother is Irish. Angelique is the daughter of Dr.

and Mrs. Shirrang M. Lele of Farmington Hills.

A family from Greece reportedly plans to enroll their two daughters in Sacred Heart's primary school soon.

Another Sacred Heart student who has seen both sides of the world is Enrica Dalsanto, a senior from Franklin who recently returned from a semester at Centre St. Marc in Lyon, the same school Sophie Henry attends.

PURAN, FIORELLA, and Enrica discussed their global experiences in the pursuit of education recently.

Although Puran said it was hard for her to leave Italy she is glad she came to America.

"I can't say what I like better here," she said. "People care more here, they try to help. I like this country, there is nothing wrong with it. Sometimes I miss Italy and Iran, too."

Puran "probably will stay here, if my father doesn't change his mind and send me somewhere else." She went to school in Italy because her father wanted her to learn more languages, she said.

She speaks Persian, Italian and English and is learning French. Puran apologizes for her English, saying, "I know

I am not talking correctly but my friends won't correct me. I would like them to correct me but they never do."

FIORELLA HAS been to the United States several times on vacations and she studied in an American school in Columbia. Her future education is uncertain since her family now lives in Panama.

"I don't want to study in Panama. I have no friends there," she said. "I may go to a boarding school in the United States." She likes being at the Academy of the Sacred Heart and her only complaint is that "it's too cold here."

Enrica has spent summers in her parents' native Italy and plans to spend a 13th year in school there next year.

Her study in France last semester was not the "totally cultural shock" it sometimes is for students who go to another country for the first time.

She lived with two different families while she was in France and "can't begin to say" what she gained from the experience.

IN AMERICA the school is the center of everyone's life. Enrica said, "We have sports and dances and field trips.

In France, you go to school and you go home. You have left your friends at school and you have other friends at home."

"There is more family unity in France," she added. "In America there tends to be more alienation from the family."

She also mentioned a "certain behavior" that takes place here, "such as shouting in the halls" — things you would never find over there because they are considered obnoxious or rude but here it is the cool thing to do."

Sophie believes American girls are more open than French girls, "almost too much," sometimes.

American girls also have more freedom and independence, Sophie said, both in their education and their activities. She cited being able to drive at 16, working and traveling by themselves at an early age.

"On the other hand, there is a lack of such qualities as politeness, civility and respectfulness," she believes. Sophie enjoys sports and other school activities such as concerts and plays and the school spirit that accompanies such activities.

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