

CHAT ROOM



Kathie O'Donohue

Awakenings in the midnight hour stir love

In the dark, I rocked you, a tiny new-born infant, rarely fussy, typically responsive. Pleased when your inner dictums compelled you to sleep through the night at a few weeks of age, I recall my dismay when around 7 months of age you began to awaken in the night. I fervently contested the notion of these sudden awakenings for about a week then began to realize you needed something at those times or you wouldn't have awakened.

When I learned to surrender my wishes for an uninterrupted night's sleep to meet your needs, we became fast friends. What an awesome world came alive to me at 3 a.m. that I had somehow missed in baby days before you.

At first, I turned on the television, but soon decided you were of greater interest. In the semidarkness, I studied your silhouette, your shadowy pout, the relative tension in your tiny clenched fist. With fascination, I watched as you grew steadily from a restless, irritated baby to a soothed little soul. You learned my nuances as well. I couldn't trick you, try as I may. When I was most fatigued and tried to impose exhaustion on you, you acted as if it were midday. When I lost patience, you became frustrated and made the night longer.

Please see CHAT ROOM, B2

Alternative spring break

Mercy girls head for Kentucky hills and Habitat

■ For the second year in a row, a group of Mercy High seniors chose to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity in lieu of a traditional spring break.

BY MARY RODRIGUE
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While many high school seniors are sunning themselves in tropical climes during the annual pilgrimage known as spring break, a group of Mercy High School students are pounding nails and breaking sweat as Habitat for Humanity volunteers.

For the second year in a row, some Mercy seniors chose an alternative spring break to Lee County, Ky., where they will help construct a home for a poor family.

"I was friends with the girls who went last year," said Katie Mato, student group organizer. "I told Miss A. I would take it over."

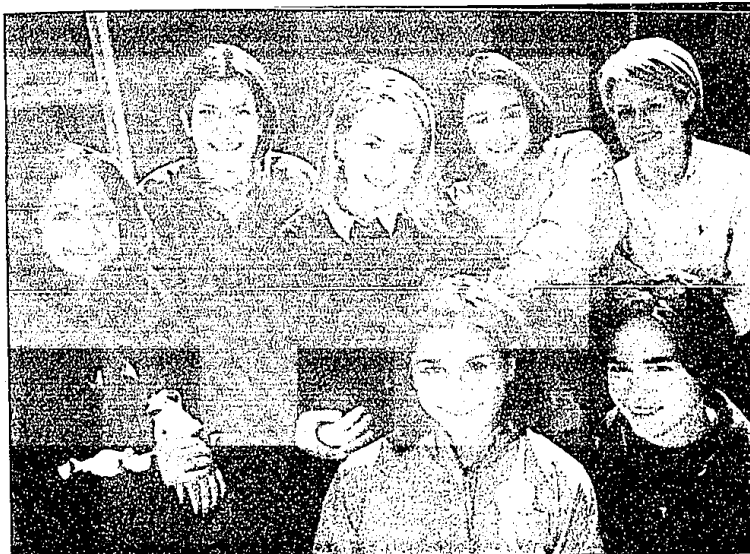
Miss A. is Pat Atkinson, Mercy's coordinator of community service. Every Mercy girl is expected to complete 25 hours of volunteer work over her high school career. Like last year's Habitat volunteers, this year's group has exceeded the obligation already by serving meals in soup kitchens, visiting the elderly in nursing homes or tutoring students.

Maureen McDonald of Redford Township says she first heard about Habitat for Humanity from her mom.

"She reads a lot of books about Jimmy Carter and he's very involved with the program," she said. "I also talked to Katie about it."

A better tradition

"I didn't have money for a traditional spring break. It's mostly a waste of brain cells anyway. This will leave us with a good feeling that will last for a long time."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

Volunteers: Arpna Dhake (at left) will chaperone Mercy students Renee Bak, Maureen McDonald, Natalie Yuhasz, Katie Mato, Mary Li Secrest and Lesley Adams. Student volunteer Christine Price is not pictured here. She was singing with the Mercyairens when the photo was taken.

Arpna Dhake, a 1990 Mercy graduate and now a counselor at the school, will chaperone. The girls lobbied her incessantly because last year's chaperone, Mary Beth Seefelt, is a new moth-

er and not available. Dhake finally gave in to the pressure.

"I will be working right beside the girls," she vowed.

A different twist this year includes

girls from another Mercy High School in Pennsylvania joining the Farmington Hills contingent in Kentucky.

Please see HABITAT, B2

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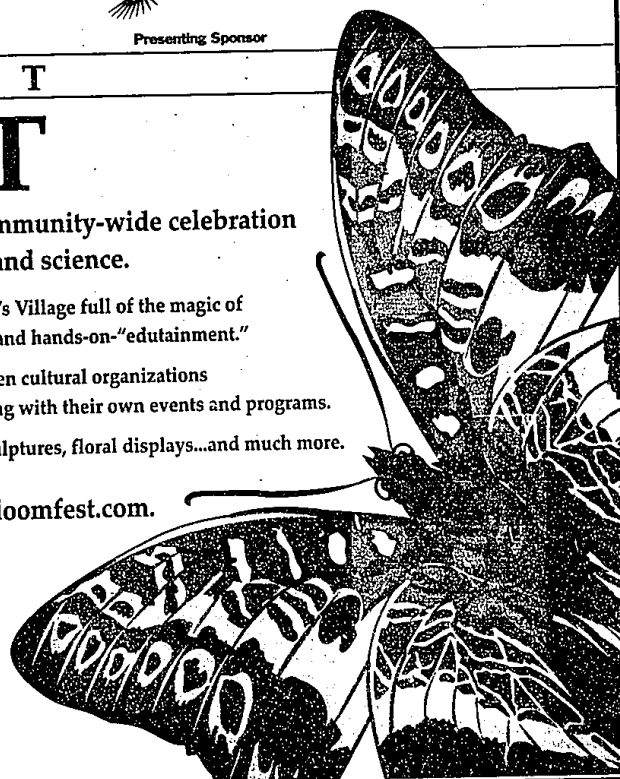
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