

# Oh Mercy!

## School exchange program unites students from two countries

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.com

They knew things were different in America as soon as they exited their airplane at Metropolitan Airport. Six teenage girls from Colegio Santa Ethnea in Buenos Aires, Argentina, walked up to the six Mercy High School students they would be spending the next month with as part of an exchange program.

Recalling the awkward scene during a recent interview at the Farmington Hills school were the six visitors, including Pia Christie Newbery, the interview took place shortly before the visitors made their return flight to Argentina last month.

"We came off and there were six girls with Sister Regina and nobody knew what to do," said Pia, 17. "Sister Regina introduced them to us, and we found there was a very big difference."

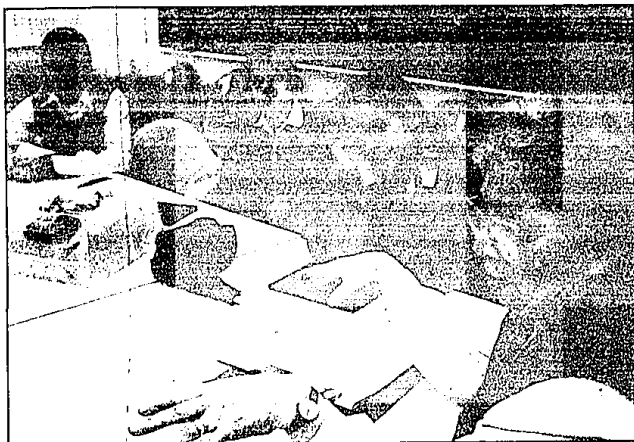
"When we say 'hello' in Argentina, we kiss and hug. And here, they shake hands. I kissed them (Mercy students) and they looked (strangely) at me, like 'What are you doing?'"

But, countered Sister Regina Marie Doelker, principal at Mercy, "When they came off the plane in one little group our girls were scared, too."

Once the exchange students and their hosts were able to get acquainted, the time flew by with a splendid mix of classes, field trips and new-found friendship. Field trips included Henry Ford Museum, the African American Museum, WDIV-TV (Channel 4), the IMAX Theatre and Franklenth.

"This is their summer vacation," Sister Regina said. "So we tried to do some fun things. But I think they (also) learned some things."

According to Sister Regina, the third annual cultural interchange between Mercy High School and St. Ethnea (also a Sisters of Mercy school) was the best of the bunch. It was sponsored by



Chat: Pia Christie Newbery (from left), Magdalena Tillous, Magdalena Julian and Sr. Regina Doelker, principal of Mercy High School, talk about the exchange program.

Mercy's administration and foreign language department.

"It's been a very good experience for these students," she said, looking around the conference room at the youthful Argentinians. "But also for our students hosting them in their own homes. It's good for us because this is another Mercy school. We're connected."

Helping with that connection, besides adhering to the Sisters of Mercy mission, was language. The host students, Edna Blacksheare, Maureen Cebula, Jenna Cobb, Ryan Kelly, Katie Landsberg and Kathy Meier, are all proficient in the Spanish language.

### Feeling at home

St. Ethnea students also speak English well, having begun learning it in first grade. The educational K-12 school of over 600 students requires they speak English for half of each day and Spanish for the other half.

Their ease with English was apparent as the visitors briefly detailed highlights of their month in Michigan - not to mention field trips to other states and even another country.

"Pia, who was hosted by Kara Landsberg: 'Everything was special for me. I had many different experiences, but I don't know which one I liked most.'"

"Dolores Walker, 17, who was hosted by Ryan Kelly: 'I liked the school in general. The girls

are very friendly. My host family and I went to Florida one weekend and to Canada for another."

"Maria Grasset, 18, who was hosted by Jenna Cobb: 'It's been very good for me because I'm more open to people. It's also made me more fluent in English and able to speak in public.'"

"Maria Teresa Lopez Llovet, 17, who goes by the name Tere, hosted by Kathy Meier: 'I liked the family that hosted me. We had fun. I liked (a field trip to) Channel 4 and for a weekend we went to Chicago. Another day we went skiing.'"

"Magdalena Tillous, 17, who was hosted by Edna Blacksheare: 'I like coming to school. It's different. (In Argentina) we



Enjoyable time: Dolores Walker, Maria Grasset and Maria Teresa Lopez Llovet enjoyed their month-long experience with Mercy High School students and their families.

### MERCY HIGH SCHOOL

don't pick our classes. We don't change our classrooms. The teachers change."

"On Valentine's Day, they gave us candy and letters. Very nice."

For the Argentinians, who were visiting during what for them is summer vacation, getting used to cold weather and snow wasn't the only big adjustment they had to make during their visit. (By the way, temperatures in Buenos Aires during February hovered around 100-degrees F.)

The music they heard here was louder and not that familiar.

and meal times were much different.

Magdalena Tillous noted that Argentinians have daily tea time, at about 5 p.m., a half-hour to sip tea and enjoy toast or croissants.

Breakfast and lunch times were about the same. But, explained Magdalena, "We have dinner from 8:30 to 10 p.m."

The exchange program, which will continue this summer when Mercy High students travel to Argentina, grew out of the Mercy religious community's commitment to support each country's cultural experiences.

### WHO'S WHO

Mercy High School students are listed first, with their visitors from Colegio Santa Ethnea listed in parentheses:

Edna Blacksheare (Magdalena Tillous)  
Maureen Cebula (Magdalena Julian)

Jenna Cobb (Maria Grasset)  
Ryan Kelly (Dolores Walker)

Katie Landsberg (Pia Christie Newbery)  
Kathy Meier (Maria Teresa Lopez Llovet)

## Talent still needed for telethon

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.com

Talent is still being sought for Farmington Public Schools' ever live district-wide telethon, scheduled for Friday, March 17, begins at North Farmington High School.

The 24-hour event, being broadcast from North's brand-new TV-10 studio, is from 3 p.m. Friday, March 17, to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 18.

The telethon will raise money for the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation. The foundation provides grants of financial support to community-based programs for residents, families, youth and children in both cities.

"We're looking for talent right now," said telethon committee chair Diane Bauman of Farmington Public Schools. "We wanted to feature employees and students, mainly student groups."

Julie Devine, a parent who is helping out with publicity for the event, chimed in that there are "many spots to fill" with a "wide range of talent."

Audition tapes must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday by telethon talent coordinator Paul Barber, who also is music coordinator in the district.

### FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Devine said. Barber is based out of Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas Street.

Besides talent, however, telethon organizers are looking for in-kind donations to be made available during an on-air drawing.

"Kids will be going around asking businesses for in-kind donations," Devine said.

During the telethon, there will be two stages set up for the various songs and skits, with one in the cable television production studio and one in the nearby auditorium, Bauman said. Performances will range from 25 to 30 minutes.

For auditioning purposes, Bauman said all submitted material will be given the once-over, to make sure it is in good taste for the audience - whether in person or watching on TV-10. Anybody interested in auditioning must submit a videotape, she added.

Bauman said the telethon should be "a fun alternative to do on a Friday night."

Meanwhile, letters were sent to members of the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce, to encourage them to sponsor the telethon. Pledges can be made in the following denominations: Telethon Sponsor, \$1,000; Telethon Benefactor, \$500; Telethon Patron, \$250; and Telethon Contributor, \$100.

Devine supplied the following details for making donations or sponsorships:

Checks should be made out to the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation, with "FPS Telethon" inscribed on the memo line.

Envelopes should be mailed to Bauman, director of school-community relations for the district, at 32500 Shawwassee, Farmington, 48336. Devine said the envelope fronts should include the words "Attention: FPS Telethon."

Those interested in auditioning for the St. Patrick's Day extravaganza should call (248) 489-9412. For more information about sponsorships, contact Bauman at (248) 489-3349.

## Observer group earns 15 SNA awards

The Observer Newspapers earned 15 awards in the Suburban Newspapers of America contest. The contest covered Oct. 5, 1998, to Oct. 5, 1999, and included suburban newspapers in the United States and Canada.

"We are proud of the recognition we receive from the SNA, a competition with our peers in the suburban newspaper business," said Hugh Gallagher, Observer managing editor. "It

affirms that we are doing a good job in serving our readers with the kind of community news they need. The judges have recognized our editors, writers, photographers and artists for outstanding work in features, hard news, photography and editorial leadership. We'll use these awards as an inspiration to do even better work in the year ahead."

Other awards include: Best

Entertainment/Lifestyle Section, first place for Arts & Leisure, second for Entertainment; Best In-Depth Reporting, Observer Newspapers, "A Report on District Court"; Best Environmental Coverage, second place for Rouge River coverage by Ron Abramczyk; Best Young People's Coverage, Observer Newspapers, Sue Mason and Christina Fuoco.

### OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEWS

The Womencenter at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus presents "Coming Into Yourself," a seminar series on self-exploration beginning on Tuesday, March 21.

The nine-week series costs \$40 and is open to the public. It meets 7-9 p.m. in the campus J

Building, Room 308. Writer Maureen Dunphy and art therapist Karen Schurgin will lead the interactive series. Written and artistic journaling are the forms of expression the self-exploration participants in exploring, finding and defining themselves.

This seminar series is sponsored by the Womencenter, a college facility that provides educational and supportive resources for area women. For further information call (248) 622-3642. The campus is located at 27055 Orchard Lake Road, just south of I-696 in Farmington Hills.

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### LOCATIONS AND TIMES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>  
Kingsley Inn  
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
Long Lake  
Woodward Ave.  
Bloomfield Hills, MI

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>  
Townsend Hotel  
7:00 PM - 9:30 PM  
S. of Maple  
W. of Old Woodward  
Birmingham, MI

THURSDAY, MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>  
Kingsley Inn  
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
Long Lake  
Woodward Ave.  
Bloomfield Hills, MI

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