

Cablevision to feature Collier service initiatives

By Lois Rogers | Features Editor

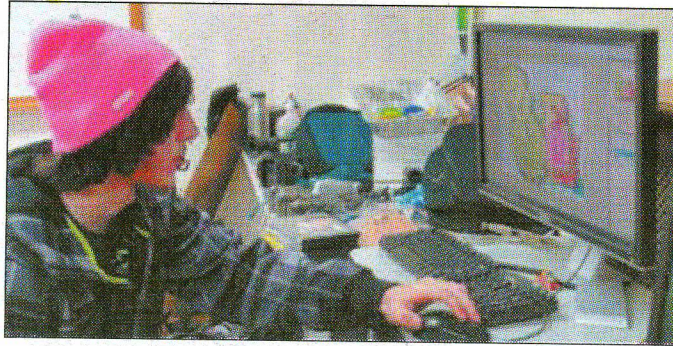
The innovative programs and inspirational students and staff who make Collier Services a true success story in alternative education are being featured on two Cablevision shows now airing around the diocese.

Both programs showcase the private, non-profit school for students with needs that could not be met in mainstream schools. "Meet the Leaders," airing through Nov. 13 at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., features an interview with principal Ray Bock and Brenda Considine, a Collier parent and special education advocate.

"Neighborhood Journal," which airs through Nov. 14 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7 p.m. presents an overview of Collier Youth Services with interviews and video of young people and staff, said Jeanne Navagh, assistant executive director at the school, located in the Wickatunk section of Marlboro Township.

Navagh said the television shows are a good way for Collier Services, operated by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd since 1927, to get the word out about the school.

"We're really trying to make sure we are reaching the students that need to be here," said Navagh. "A lot of parents aren't aware of Collier and the fact that it is a very special place... a very safe, very nurturing environment for the kids."



Skills for the Future

— In this file photo, a student works on a 3D computer graphics project in Collier High School, Wickatunk. The students learn a variety of life and career skills to help them excel after graduation. Dorothy K. LaMantia photo

Over the decades, the Good Shepherd sisters have nurtured the tract donated to them by Mrs. Robert Collier, the devout widow of Robert Collier, a publishing pioneer who's "Collier's Weekly," set an early standard in the magazine industry.

From modest beginnings as a residential school for neglected girls, Collier Services has grown to include Collier High School and now, Collier Middle School with a combined enrollment of more than 120 at-risk students, a group home in Red Bank and transitional housing in Keyport for 15 young women and the flourishing Kateri Environmental and summer programs which serves approximately 200 youngsters.

"Cablevision filmed the 'Leaders' segment in its Newark studio and the 'Neighborhood Journal' here, which really got everyone involved," said Navagh. "They sent a crew out one Friday and interviewed students in

all the programs and went out to Collier House in Keyport, our transitional home for young women and spoke with several residents there."

There was a special focus, she said, on the new middle school which is open to students in grades 6 through 8 as well as Collier High School, the jewel in the crown of the program.

The television shows highlight the fact that Colliers offers an extensive academic curriculum geared toward preparing students challenged by emotional and behavioral issues for higher education. A strong counseling component encourages the students to address their individual issues, she said.

Collier also offers vocational training in the culinary arts, cosmetology, building trades and computer programming. Students get on-the-job experience and opportunities to minister to the less fortunate, such as styling hair for the handicapped and

the elderly in nursing homes, she said.

Both shows can be seen by Cablevision subscribers on channels 78 or 118 depending on your county. Go to the Collier website at www.collieryouthservices.org to view the shows online. For previous Monitor coverage of the school, go to www.trentonmonitor.org and search Collier Services.

Signal of support

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the program selected to create the Christmas ornaments was a great signal of support, Westendorf said.

"We were so thrilled when Amanda's Easel was chosen for this honor," said Westendorf who added that the theme the organization presented was "every child deserves a safe home."

The New Jersey tree is one of 56 smaller, decorated trees representing all 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia which were planted surrounding the National Christmas Tree in 1954 to form a "Pathway of Peace" on the Ellipse.

The National Christmas Tree and the Pathway of Peace are illuminated each evening from dusk until 11 p.m. from Dec. 1 through Jan. 1. Accompanying displays include a large Christmas manger as well as a Yule log and a large-scale model train. Musical performances by volunteer choirs and dancers are held nightly on the Ellipse stage.

For information about Amanda's Easel, visit http://www.180nj.org/children_arttherapy.html