

Hi, as many of you may know, my name is Kevin Seekely, and I am up here to share the message of another graduating senior who could not be here today, but wanted to be part of this service. I may not look like Melissa Mauter, but I will do my best to represent her words, so here it goes ...

I have a small confession to make ... and it's always easier to make them when you're out of town ... in DC, for example, because that's where I am right now. The reason I first came to Fairmount and CHEER was to seek refuge from my all girl school environment... and I had heard rumors about their being well-mannered and even handsome young men. (*Note for Kevin: "Perhaps she was thinking of me ..." Or "Well"*)

It turns out that it was a good move to come to CHEER with my friend that one Sunday night. The friendships I have made with guys and girls through CHEER are some of my strongest ones. You see, my friends from CHEER are the ones that I trust the most.

At the close of my first youth group meeting, CHEER leaders immediately asked if I was interested in being on Fairmount's youth mailing list. I explained, hesitantly, that my family wasn't members of Fairmount and that they didn't even attend. At the beginning of the evening, I felt that I was just a friend visiting the group for one night. But by the end I felt like so much more than that. No one seemed to care that my family didn't belong here. Everyone came up to me and said in one form or another "hey, be sure you come back next Sunday."

My involvement in CHEER is a testimony to the fact that Fairmount really does welcome everyone. I owe a thank you to my family who still attend and remain members of a different church. My family has allowed me to experiment with my faith and become involved in the Church that was right for me. This church undoubtedly has been Fairmount.

So many adults in this congregation have made the effort to reach out and get to know me. In our conversations, they emphasized how confident they were in the future of this church because of its youth. While there are too many to name, in particular I want to thank Bonnie, Brendan, Chris, Joy, Jim, Ann, Louise, Dr. Dave, Lincoln and Erin These are just some of the adults who have shared with me through Fairmount activities, including weekly CHEER; our trips to Kentucky to build with Habitat and to the Dominican Republic to work at the hospital and in the batays; weekend retreats; as well as annual Strawberry Festivals, car washes, pancake breakfasts, and other church functions I have been to. I am thankful for these Fairmount events, which have given me the chance to serve, to learn and to have fun. I can't stop coming to them because they are so full of the energy, creativity, and high spirits ... thanks to this congregation.

OK, there have been some cute boys, too ...

Simply put, this congregation puts more support and faith into its youth than any congregation I know. As a result, I have made lasting friendships with many others – both students and adults – and have found a place where I belong. I guess the real thing I wanted you to know is that Fairmount is right for me ... because of all of you.

Melissa Mauter