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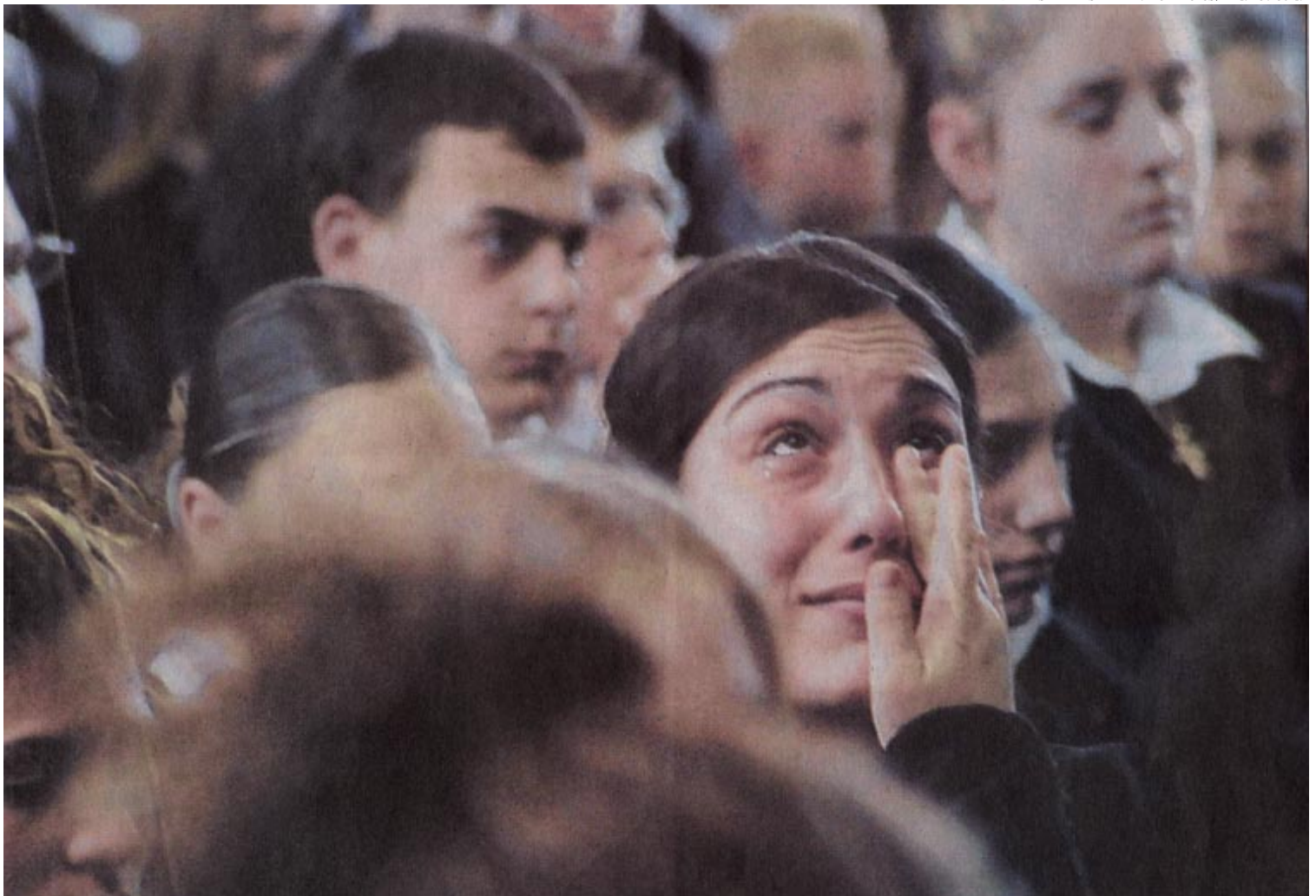
Staten Island Advance

EXTRA

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

'Breaking the Cycle' of hatred

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/FRANK J. JOHNS



Angelique Donato wipes a tear as she listens to Detective Steven McDonald at Moore Catholic High School.

At Moore Catholic HS, 2 very different men talk about the importance of forgiveness

By KIAWANA RICH
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

They make an unlikely, but excellent team: A young, lively New York City police detective who is proud to be one of New York's Finest and a tall, lanky older man of German descent with a semi-pronounced foreign accent.

One will always have to live with the trauma he suffered in a shooting; the other will always have to live with the trauma suffered by his family during World War II.

It is their pasts that have brought these two men together to spread a message of peace, repentance and forgiveness.

Steven McDonald, a cop, and Johann Christoph Arnold, a Protestant pastor and author, head "Breaking The Cycle," an award-winning program aiming to prevent

school violence through conflict resolution.

Yesterday McDonald and Arnold brought their message to 900 students at Moore Catholic High School, Graniteville.

Arnold began by recounting his story. Before he was born, his family lived in Germany and was part of a group of people that helped Jewish families during the Holocaust — an affiliation he knows cost them dearly.

He believes his father was allowed to die while having a

routine operation at the age of 51; his father-in-law was imprisoned by the Nazis, but escaped three months later.

Arnold said, his family was expelled from Germany in 1937, prior to World War II. As an adult, he eventually moved to the United States.

FORGIVENESS

Here he marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. It was there he began learning the importance of forgiveness.

"After Martin Luther King Jr.'s house was burned down, and even after numerous assassination attempts, this man, right from the start, proclaimed that forgiveness was the only way. And he tried to lead the black people to find forgiveness [for what was being done to them]," Arnold said.

Likewise, Jesus Christ was tortured but found it in his heart to forgive, Arnold said.

"Jesus was horribly tortured, whipped and flogged, but his much greater pain was that he was hurt by the sin and hardness of heart of mankind. Jesus wanted to free all of us [by teaching us to forgive]," Arnold said.

ANOTHER STORY

McDonald then shared his story with the students, who at times were left teary-eyed.

"I've been a New York City police officer for 20 years and I wanted to be one because of my family," he said. "It was a tradition that our family members were always involved in law enforcement."

McDonald recalled the day in 1986 when he was shot by 15-year-old Shavod Jones, leaving him paralyzed for life.

"He shot me in the head



Detective Steven McDonald, right, speaks to the students at Moore as author Johann Christoph Arnold listens.



The principle of Moore Catholic, Douglas McManus, left, introduces Johann Christoph Arnold and Detective Steven McDonald to the student body.

above my right eye and then he shot me in the throat, and then, standing over me, he shot me a third time," McDonald said.

At first, he didn't understand why he had been shot, McDonald said. But he was amazed by all the love, support and prayers people showed him.

That, coupled with the reality of his situation, allowed McDonald to build a stronger relationship with God and ultimately find forgiveness for Jones.

"As a husband and a new father I would be able to go on with my life and live better for it," McDonald said. "I knew that anger would destroy my life and destroy my marriage."

McDonald added that forgiveness can go a long way.

"We became friends," he said of his assailant. "He apologized to my wife and me and so I know great things are possible."

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