around the country," Esposito said. "Flocknote saved Holy Week for one parish. The city had planned a construction project right in front of the church, right during Holy Week. The parish was already using Flocknote. They sent out a text asking parishioners to please contact the city, and all these people did. Sure enough the city heard the request and delayed the project until after Easter."

The program can also assist with events such as winter storms, notifying people when an activity is closed at the last minute; or can send a message from the pastor.

"Some priests record their homilies and send them out," Esposito added.

For the Rev. Andrew Lauricella, parochial vicar of the parish, the new online system provides speed.

"This helps us to communicate with parish-

SEE **CHURCH** ON PAGE 4C

FLOCKNOTE

Those interested in knowing more about Flocknotes, an online system that links the parisioners of St. Vincent De Paul, can send a text to 84576 and type in the word "vincent." Flocknotes will send a confirmation text; or visit www.flocknotes.com/svdp; or phone the parish at 283-2715.

opening of the first White Rabbit.

And the research continues. "We try to get customer feed-

ed original tart, vanilla, dreamy chocolate, sea salt caramel pretzel, mango sorbet, tropical sorbet, birthday cake, candy bar get boring.

Matt Thompson, manager of the Tonawanda store, said business has been going well, and ages.

"We already have regulars," he said, "and we've only been here a month."

New book inspired by Tonawanda landfill testing

LITERATURE: *Book won Random House young adult contest.*

STAFF REPORTS

Though she had only lived in Western New York for a couple of years — and in Buffalo at that — Corina Vacco felt so compelled by the concern of residents who live near the Tonawanda landfill that she attended meetings about the site's safety, followed stories in the newspaper and just recently, from the other side of the country, wrote a book.

To be clear, Vacco's young adult release, "My Chemical Mountain," isn't explicitly about the Tonawanda landfill — it doesn't even use specific geographical names or references. But it was certainly inspired by the years of testing, meetings and citizen complaints about the site that sits right near the border of the city and town of Tonawanda, the author said.

Vacco's interest in the landfill began in 2006 when a friend of hers living in the city expressed concern over the landfill.

"My friend lives right next to the landfill," Vacco said. "She told me that she received a letter from the City of Tonawanda saying she couldn't eat any vegetables out of her garden. She and her husband put up a greenhouse so they could grow. They tried to sell their house but couldn't."

Vacco had only just moved to Western New York two years earlier with her husband, who was transfered to the area as part of his job with the U.S. Coast Guard. They lived in Buffalo at the time, and even though the potential landfill problems didn't concern her, Vacco said she couldn't just ignore the problem.

"We're all breathing the same air," she said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ultimately determined the levels of radioactive waste in the landfill weren't harmful, but Vacco remained unconvinced. She went to meetings where she said residents' concerns were often quickly shut down by officials.

"One woman said 22 people on her street had cancer, but she was told she can't connect that to landfill. I was fed up," Vacco said. "I thought I have to write about this because there are people who are passionate in this audience and they're just being shut down."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

JUST OUT: Corina Vacco's new young adult book, "My Chemical Mountain" is based on meetings she attended about citizen concerns about the Tonawanda landfill.

She said she was appalled to learn how close a nearby elementary school is to the site and hear stories from some residents about playing at the landfill as children.

So Vacco, who now lives in California, put pen to paper and wrote the story of two fictitious kids on the brink of adulthood as their town struggles with similar concerns of pollution. She said she drew not only from stories she heard about the Tonawanda landfill, but from other similar stories across the world.

"My mom used to chase the mosquito truck down the street and dance in the clouds of pesticide" as a child, Vacco said. "People now think that's so crazy.

"I decided to write the book from the perspect of a boy who has spent his life playing in the landfill and swimming in the creek. I wanted to paint a story that focused not on pollution ... but I wanted to write one about a story of friends and these rules for your whole

SEE **BOOK** ON PAGE 6C

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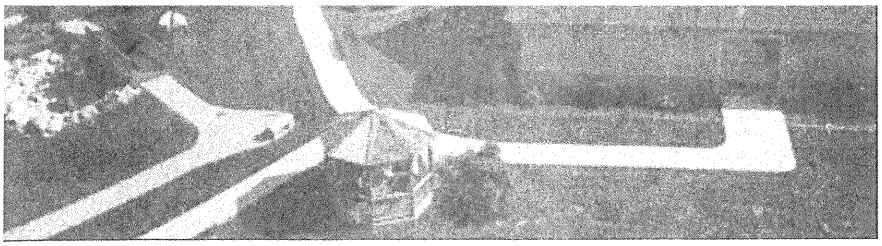


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IG: This aerial photo shows the current Niagara Hospice campus on Sunset ı the Town of Lockport. The organization served its first patient 25 years ago, ı small rented office in Cambria.

ere is an ›hasis on quality of We provide e, but it's framing of e — to die cefully and in pain."

agara Hospice co-ıder Patricia Evans

ersary Gala Under ars at 6 p.m. Aug. eath the newly con-ed Dominic Laric-ımily Pavilion on ınset Drive Cam-The gala will fea-ntique car rides, a ızing location with ›pes, live and silent n items, music by m Beishline Quar-cal wines from the :a Wine Trail and and regional craft provided by WNY :lub, catering by the rora Inn, live and auctions, a chance $10,000 and more. ddition to the Gala, :torial scrapbook ating Niagara Hos-history going back 30 is being pub-, and will be avail-t the Gala.

Years of Shared eys" starts when ng local hospice vas just an idea.

ıs, who has been a member since the ning, along with teers Janice Litz, Ligammari and Biamonte, pored over boxes and files from the last 33 years to assemble and design the limited edition book, that will be available for a $20 donation at the Gala, and is already available online at NiagaraHospice.org.

Many Niagara Hospice volunteers, staff and hospice family members and founders are remembered throughout the professionally printed book. Funds raised from both the book and the Gala will benefit Niagara Hospice patients and families.

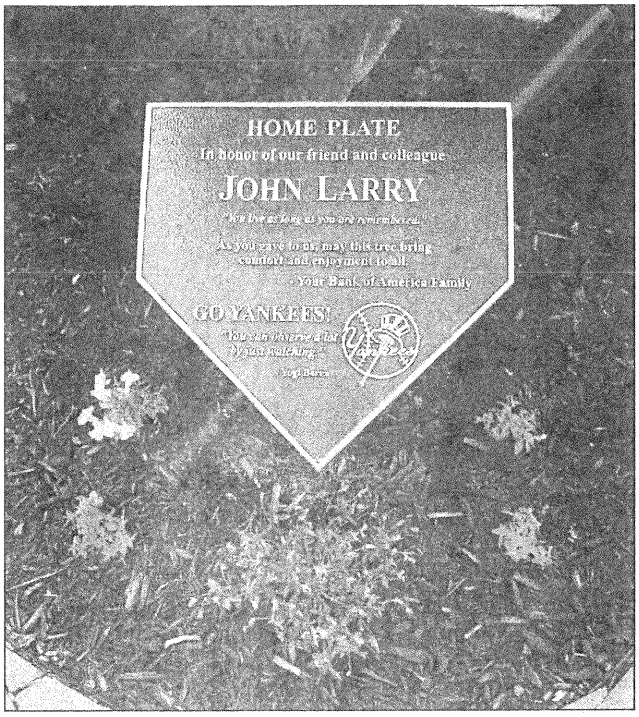
Although it would seem to be a depressing mission, the workers at hospice believe that they are offering hope, both for the patients and families they serve.

"There is an emphasis on the quality of life. We provide hope, but it's a reframing of hope — to die peacefully and not in pain.

The family is a big part of it. We educate them and help them cope. Many times, when you can alleviate the patient's pain, you alleviate the family's stress," Evans said.

In fact, families are offered hospice bereavement services for 13 months after a death.

"I was proud to be part of the small group that Rev. Bob Cook organized back in 1980. And I'm so proud of how it has evolved and grown," Evans said.

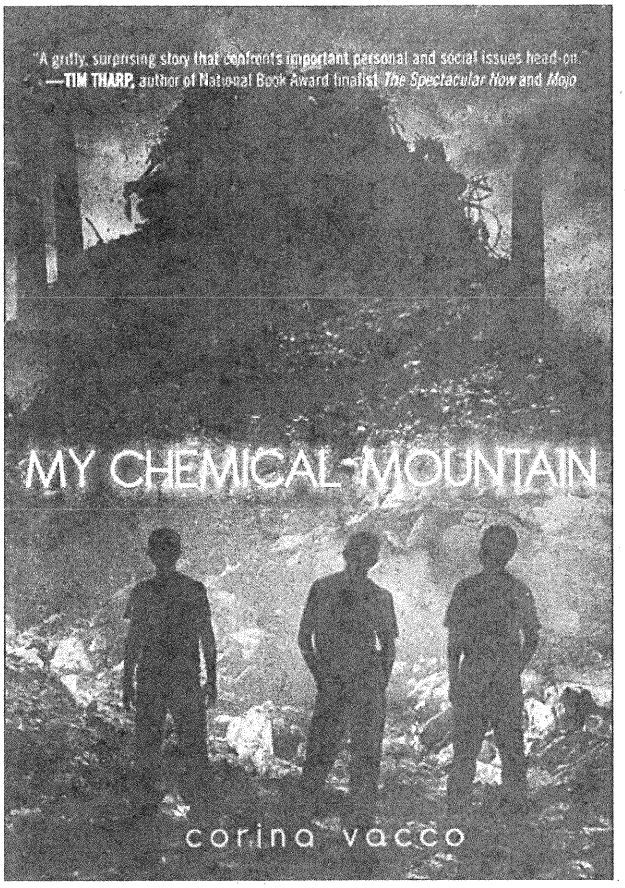


ANNE CALOS/STAFF

MEMORIAL: This whimsical memorial is one of many placed around the grounds of Niagara Hospice.

opening band. In the old days, opening for a band like Kiss was a band's big shot at stardom, and if you don't believe it, the

Thom Jennings writes a weekly column on the music scene for Sunday Lifestyles. Email him at thomjennings@rochester.rr.com.



CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

NEW RELEASE: "My Chemical Mountain" was released by Random House in June.

BOOK ...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

lives. As you're becoming older you have to make a choice, change the situation and it's about what will it cost you.

"One of the boys wants to act out in violence because he's upset about a chemical company that's been polluting their town ... he wants revenge. Another one of the boys wants to go about it in a more reasonable way by going to town meetings."

Vacco said she was amazed when "My Chemical Mountain" was picked up to be published by Random House, which selected the book as the winner of the Delacourt Press contest for best young adult novel. Random House only accepts unsolicited manuscripts once a year as part of the contest and chose Vacco's book to be published out of about 700 submissions.

Ultimately she hopes her book will "wake up some of these scoundrels" whose companies pollute the land where people live.

"I want the people who participated in that (Tonawanda landfill) meeting that night and went home without any hope to know that they're not alone and people did hear them," she said.

THANKS FOR READING