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Father Roy Drake Is 'Just One of the Guys'

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Father Roy Drake doesn't look or act like a priest, and that's probably good.

Young people find it easy to talk to the 59-year-old priest. They talk about their drugs and alcohol. He doesn't pass judgment; he just helps them quit.

He'll drive out to the suburbs to pick up a teen-ager who doesn't have a ride to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

He'll take a call close to midnight from a teen in trouble.

He's simply Roy or Father Roy to most teens.

"He's more or less one of the guys," said one Manlius teen-ager whom Drake helped. "He's young at heart. He's great for newcomers. He's always real eager to help you."

Drake, an administrator at Le Moyne College who has taught in high schools and universities, saw that some young people were scared to go to college. They didn't know if they could resist the drugs and alcohol there.

He persuaded Le Moyne to lease a couple of apartments to create a drug-free living place for recovering teens. It was the first of its kind in the nation. Today, the college has an entire building, Wilson Hall, and a counselor for recovering students.

Drake doesn't like to take credit for the things he's done. He just wants to help young people get off alcohol and drugs and stay off.

"I listen, that's all," he said "It's nothing special. It's the kids who do it, not me."

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