

Families Aided at Center

As was to be expected, the multi-function Rochester Catholic Family Center increased its services once again this past year.

There were 1421 new applications for service, while a total of 2,688 families received care. The term Family Center is most appropriate because the professional staff of dedicated and experienced workers offer services in all areas of the family constellation. Following are some of the highlights of these services:

Adoption
Last year Catholic Family Center placed an even 100 children into adoption. This represents an increase of ten percent over the previous year.

Unlike many Catholic agencies across the country, Catholic Family Center does place children with couples of mixed religion. Furthermore, Catholic Family Center has placed three and now even four adoptive children with the same couple. Most of the children placed, of course, are infants, who usually are in foster care for several weeks, although this past year fourteen babies were placed directly from the hospital.

Occasionally, Catholic Family Center has children of mixed religion, Oriental, and handicapped infants. While it would seem much more difficult to place these children, nevertheless, there are couples in the community who would prefer this type of child.

Adoptive couples first come to a group meeting at which many of the basic questions are answered and discussed. Subsequently the couples are seen individually in a series of interviews—both in the office and at home. In this way the case-worker can get to know the couple quite well, and this is most helpful both in terms of the selection of the child to be placed and in the process of legalization, which is finalized about six months after placement.

Unwed Parenthood

A social agency that provides such service must necessarily help the unwed mother in certain details such as pre-natal care and the like. Many people feel that this is the extent of the service provided. Catholic Family Center however, through the skill of the case-worker, is able to work with the girl on an emotional level and thereby help her to work out such problems as to whether to keep the baby or to surrender the child for adoption.

Furthermore, in the counseling relationship, the unwed mother is able to decide whether or not she wishes to remain at home; if not, whether she would rather go to a foster home or a maternity home. Other problems, such as financial obligations and tutoring services are discussed. Provision is made for the girl from out of town to come to Rochester and, in some cases, the reverse.

Counseling service is offered to the unwed mother after delivery and also to the father of the child if appropriate. In all

matters the strictest confidentiality is maintained.

Foster Home Care

During the past year, Catholic Family Center supervised the care of 314 children in foster homes. Currently there are 182 foster homes available. While this number may sound impressive, there is still a great need however for more foster homes, especially those which would care for teenagers and unwed mothers.

The Family Center conducts a rather intensive foster



Dennis Conheady and Joyce Kohlmeier check chart of foster homes with Father Joseph D'Aurizio and William Charbonneau at Catholic Family Center offices in Columbus Building.

home finding campaign in the fall of 1964. Many interested couples had come to the various meetings, and of these some have applied for foster care.

One of the most pressing needs in the foster care program is the availability of several homes for the children who either have outgrown or no longer need the services of St. Joseph's Villa. The State Youth Board contemplates the opening of a group home in Rochester, but even when this is accomplished, it will not be able to accommodate the number of children who would need such a facility.

"I am sure that there are many Catholic couples in the Rochester area," says Father D'Aurizio, "who would qualify as foster parents for the children coming from St. Joseph's Villa and at the same time derive much satisfaction in this most worthy act of charity."

Marriage Counseling

The marriage counseling unit has probably seen the greatest increase in application for service. Last year there were 275 applications. In the very near future another caseworker will be added to the unit, thus making three professionally trained and experienced counselors devoting their time exclusively to this phase of social work.

Catholic Family Center feels that its marriage counseling program is enhanced by the use of many varied approaches based on the individual need. Consequently, besides the basic interviews, which are most important, Catholic Family Center has the availability of both psychological and psychiatric consultation. Rather recently the group method has been employed.

Several women meet once a week and discuss their problems. Sometimes this is more meaningful to the individuals,

and in this situation, they learn to relate and react to others more easily, while at the same time they receive support from each other.

The marriage counseling unit, of its very nature, enhances the skill and performance of the caseworkers. It enables them to share knowledge and experience, to discuss mutual problems and approaches, to be under the supervision of the same caseworker director, and, if feasible, to share the same case.

The approach of family counseling, in which all members of the family participate, has been used, and with great success. Referrals to psychiatric services, homemaker services, and the Welfare Department have been made when appropriate. At the present time research is being conducted on the intake phase of marriage counseling in order to obviate in some measure the possibility of a long waiting list.

Admissions to St. Ann's

Last year the Family Center processed 251 applications to St. Ann's Home for the aged. 131 people were admitted. The process is not merely a mechanical or fact finding method. Rather, the caseworker counsels both the client and relatives in terms of the appropriateness of the Home, whose goal is the treatment and rehabilitation, albeit partial, of the patient.

In most instances, this means much environmental planning. It is the responsibility of Catholic Family Center to evaluate the applications to discover those who can best use the facilities of the Home.

The final decision of acceptance or not resides with the Admissions Committee, whose duty it is to evaluate the medical data and social factors. If it is decided that the patient cannot be accepted, then the social caseworker of Catholic

Inner-City Programs

For the past eight years Catholic Family Center has operated a "reaching-out" program in the seventh ward. A similar program was started in the third ward four years ago. At the present time, there is a total of 58 active cases in these two areas. Basically it is a counseling program both to individuals and families, although many other problems have emerged, and these have been met by the services of Catholic Family Center or by referrals to other appropriate agencies.

While these cases come to the attention of Catholic Family Center through various sources, the main source of referral are other clients who have been satisfied.

Such a program obviously necessitates greater skill and experience on the part of the caseworker, for he deals with people from an entirely different cultural and socially economic background. In his relationship he does not impose his own cultural values, but rather works within the framework of his client's own cultural orientation.

The Catholic Family Center has also been involved in the

sponsoring of an Urban Renewal Institute for clergymen and social workers with the intention of continuing this project.

Individual Counseling

Quite often people with personality adjustment problems seek the help of Catholic Family Center. If the problems are severe, then they are referred to psychiatric services. If not, the professionally prepared psychiatric caseworkers are able to help them work through some of these problems.

Supervision

An important part of the work of Catholic Family Center is to provide its workers with the needed supervision and consultation as they work with their clients. Even the trained caseworkers use this supervision in the form of guidance, learning experiences, development of skills and support in their casework relationship. Because of the high standards and quality of its supervisors, Catholic Family Center has become a "residency" for students doing their field work in pursuit of their graduate degree in Social Work. These students come from the University of Buffalo and St. Patrick's College of the University of Ottawa.



Looking for a home

25 Years at Helm of Center

With 25 years at the Catholic Family Center behind him, Executive Secretary George W. Montgomery is a career social worker who likes his field and doesn't hesitate to say so.

"With one exception," he smiles, "and that's budget time each year. But apart from that, I'm very satisfied with this work."

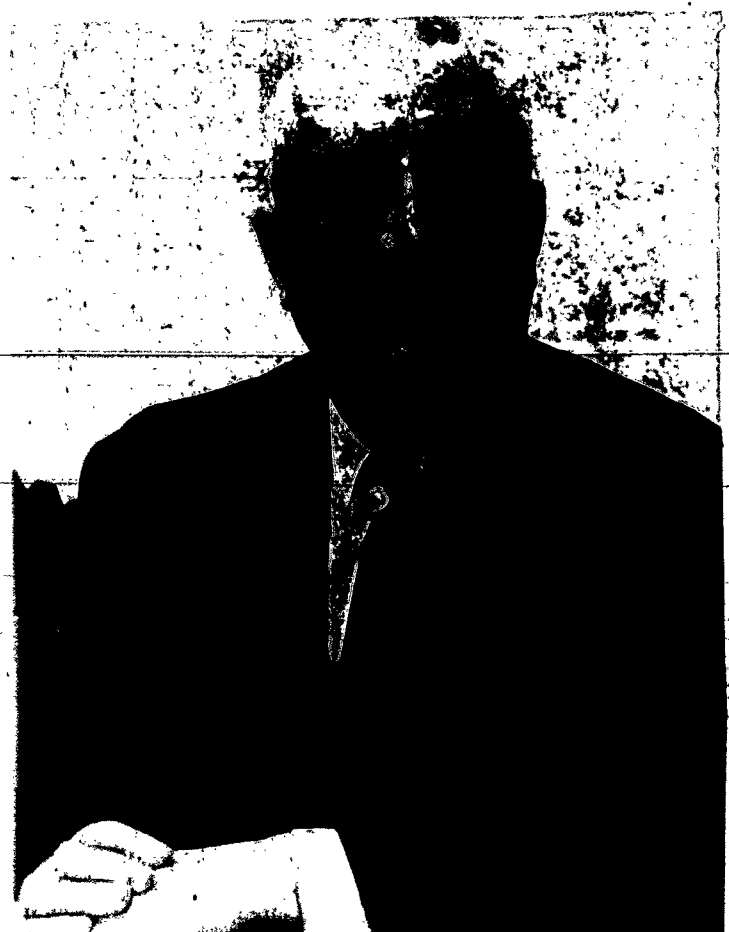
Montgomery came to the Catholic Family Center two years after he'd finished his college work (a B.A. and M.A. at Albany State), and with the exception of three years military service, has been there ever since.

He broke into social work as a psychologist at the Boys School at Industry, but after two years moved into the area of family problems which offered a larger scope.

Although it was a standard joke during World War II that a man going into military service almost never wound up in a field that his civilian background had trained him for, Montgomery was an exception. He served in the U.S. Army for 40 months — and as a clinical psychologist.

Entering the Army in April of 1943, he was commissioned in October, '44, and spent almost two years overseas in England and France. He was discharged in August, 1946 as a First Lieutenant and was soon back to work at the Catholic Family Center.

He resumed his job as caseworker, and continued as such until 1950 when he became a casework supervisor. In 1952,



GEORGE W. MONTGOMERY, JR.

he took over the reins as Executive Secretary, following Miss Kathleen d'Olier, who had held that post for 28 years.

George Montgomery speaks with great respect for his predecessor, "who was a real pioneer" in many areas of social work, he says.

"Basically, I'm responsible for the day to day operation of the agency."

He in turn serves under Father William Charbonneau, who is director of the Center.

To be more specific, Montgomery does supervise intake work, supervises the casework directors, handles the financial management of the agency, is responsible for personnel, acts as liaison between the Center and St. Ann's Home, and (with Father Charbonneau) as liaison between the Center and its 25-member board.

Montgomery has lived through a transition period, which has seen the focus of the Catholic Family Center shift from primarily relief services to primarily counseling services.

"Back in 1940, the private agencies were still carrying much of the burden for direct relief assistance. As the public agencies assumed most of the load, our role developed more along the counseling line. Today we deal in every type of marriage and family problem, with the exception of direct (financial) public assistance," he explains.

The case load of the Center has grown apace during the Montgomery era, too. In 1940, a staff of 20 professionals was dealing with 1,800 families a year; today, a staff of 33 works with 2,500 families a year.

Reflecting on the emphasis on counseling, Montgomery notes:

"People with marriage problems are more apt to face up to the seriousness of their difficulties, and are less hesitant to seek counseling today," he commented.

Montgomery's wife, Beatrice, has more than ordinary empathy for her husband's working life for she too, is a social worker. She is presently intake supervisor at the Child Welfare Division of Monroe County. She went back to work part-time when her two children were sufficiently grown up.

Montgomery's son David is studying hotel management at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, while his daughter, Janet, is a Mercy High senior, with her mind on teacher training at Buffalo State next year. The Montgomerys are members of St. Margaret Mary's parish.

Guild House For Young Ladies

St. Elizabeth's Guild House has been known in Rochester since 1917. It was founded by Monsignor Thomas F. Connors of Blessed Sacrament Church. At that time it served as a residence for students and business girls.

In 1959 the present residence was opened and continues to give girls supervised living when away from home. During the past year, 58 different girls made their home in the residence. Of this group, some were business girls and some students who attend Harper Beauty School, Monroe Community College and Rochester Business Institute.

Agency referrals were made for young ladies who have passed the age for foster homes yet are too young to be in supervised living quarters. Agencies that are using the residence at the present time are Auburn Welfare Department, Catholic Family Center, Family Service, Hillside Children's Center, Monroe County Department of Social Welfare, New York State Rehabilitation, Orleans County Department of Social Welfare, Rochester State Hospital and R Wing of Strong Memorial Hospital.

Letter from a Mother

I feel honored and grateful to be able to try to express the appreciation and high esteem we, as parents, feel towards St. Elizabeth's Guild House, which reflects so clearly the fine dignified and motherly influence of the Director and her capable staff.

I say this as a parent of one of the girls staying there, and perhaps a little more reluctant to feel that she could be away from home than most parents, since our daughter is mentally retarded. But we feel that she must be given the opportunity of special training that can only be found in a larger city such as Rochester, rather than allowing her to remain completely sheltered and isolated at home in our small town.

We were most fortunate to be guided by interested and knowing people who recommended St. Elizabeth's Guild House as a possible residence for her during her stay in Rochester.

From the beginning, we were so graciously and sincerely greeted; acquainted with the facilities and the rules; and kind consideration was given for our special problem, so that I felt there would be a discipline which is always needed; but that it would be tempered with kindness and sincere concern for the individual and her special needs.

The inherent dignity and respectfulness that prevails throughout the home certainly gives any parent the feeling

that their daughter will not be allowed to become careless in her conduct or slipshod in her manners or attire.

We have never worried about our daughter's safety or welfare because from the start I realized that the Director and her staff (all of whom we've had the pleasure of meeting) were very responsible people who had a dedicated sense of duty to the girls and their parents. And this has been borne out at times when the Director has, without hesitation, called us long distance to clarify decisions about our daughter's associations and activities.

However, I would be satisfied to abide by the Director's judgment anytime as she always does a superb job and treats the girl as though she were her own daughter.

I realize now that I was over-protective and this association with other girls has helped our daughter to be more self-sufficient. The housemothers, each in their own way, have helped her do her own laundry, ironing, mending and even went so far as to help her sew Christmas gifts. Also, they encouraged her to use her spare time advantageously, helped her to read and write letters home and also reminded her to send birthday and other greeting cards which have so much meaning to us when we know all the effort that is put into this.

They tactfully guide her money expenditures; see to it that she saves money for necessary things such as dry-cleaning and bus fare. There are just so many details that are taken care of with no thought of personal gain, and one who has a normal child just can't begin to realize how humbly grateful we feel for the dedicated staff of St. Elizabeth's Guild, who truly make it a dignified and respectable home for girls away from home.

Grandmothers Included

Grandmothers are not the same the world over, but they do have at least one thing in common—their joy and delight in their grandchildren.

This was clearly evidenced recently, when ladies from the Columbus Club and the Hi-Neighbor Club, both senior citizens groups, affiliated with the Genesee Settlement House, attended a program together.

Different cultures and language barriers prevented these ladies from becoming friendly until some one brought out pictures of their grandchildren.

This ever so popular enjoyment among grandparents "broke the ice" as the pictures were passed around; heads nodded and smiles broadened—a common ground had been found, the beginning of a program had been established.

Activities For 2,154

Genesee Settlement House provided educational, social and recreational services to 2,154 individuals—adults and children living in the Settlement House neighborhood. There was a total attendance at all activities of 94,212.

This included a summer side-walk activities program with an enrollment of 187 boys and girls and a summer day camp enrollment of 250.

Hi-Neighbor Center for Senior Citizens had a membership of 90 senior citizens with an attendance of 4,068.

More Than 100 Home at Villa

During the past year 104 children have been cared for at St. Joseph's Villa. They range in age from seven to sixteen living in five cottages.

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