

'Adopt-a-Patient'

State Hospital Launches New Visiting Program

By PAT PETRASKE

She was brought to the hospital 20 years ago by her daughter, and hasn't seen the daughter since.

A young deaf mute was considered a "lost cause" by the staff of the state hospital until the attention of a volunteer made the youngster "blossom out."

Situations such as these will be faced by volunteers who are about to take under their wing patients at the Rochester State Hospital through the Adopt-a-Patient program sponsored by the Mental Health Association.

Presently 900 out of approximately 2000 patients have no contact with the outside world. "Many of these people haven't had a visitor in 10, 15, 20 years," said Mary Ann Johnson, director of the Adopt-a-Patient program in Rochester.

The term "adopt" has been misconstrued by many people who are leery of the program because they do not feel they can assume legal responsibilities. "Adopt is not used in the legal sense. The program provides a friend in the real sense of the word; volunteers are not out to do charity," explained Louis Kash, a speaker for the program.

Modeled after an Indiana project, Adopt-a-Patient seeks a one-on-one relationship between a volunteer and a forgotten patient. The "adopter" will take the patient to lunch or to the movies, and send him cards, small gifts or magazines. Continuity of contact is stressed by members of the Adopt-a-Patient committee. "It's not going to help a person if he sees a new face everytime," Kash explained.

Approximately 12 volunteers have signed up to be adopters since the program was launched in the beginning of the Summer. Mrs. Johnson noted that so far all the volunteers are women and most of them are former nurses, familiar with a hospital setting.

The pilot attempt will match adopters with patients in the hospital's unit D, described by Mrs. Johnson as a "catchment for Rochester residents." Five in-house patients and five transitional patients, those who are in halfway houses preparing to live independently, will be "adopted." The patients are not yet aware of the program because with "any kind of delay, the patients will feel personally let down," according to Kash.

The John F. Wegman Foundation, which funds beginning projects for only one year, granted the program \$3,500. New sources of funds must be obtained for next year.

An Adopt-a-Patient program eventually will attempt to ease the transition for some of the long term patients. Many patients fear leaving the structured situation and protection that an institution offers. "We hope to reach the patients who have no hope of getting out," Kash said.

Efforts are made to match the volunteer with a patient of the same sex, similar age and interests. Volunteers must fill out an application and be interviewed before attending the orientation meeting. The final decision of who is assigned to whom is left to the hospital.

Over 6,000 adopters are befriending patients across the

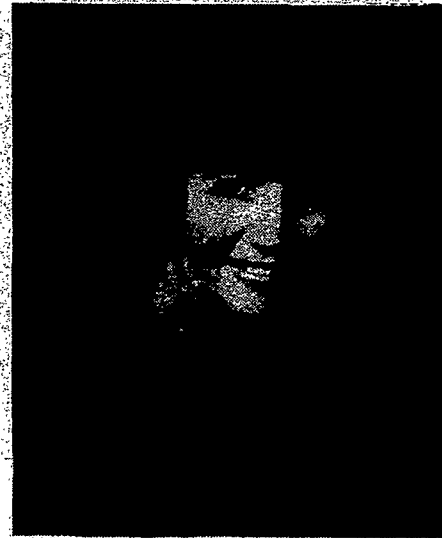
state. And there are probably 6,000 stories told on the results of this personal interaction, according to Betty Lerner, who was instrumental in obtaining the initial funding money. In her proposal to the Wegman Foundation, Mrs. Lerner cited the case of one patient who, after several visits from her adopter, became well enough to leave. Back in her own community, she looked up a patient to adopt.

Volunteers are warned to expect little, if any, response from the patients at first. "Some patients are in a catatonic state; they're aware of what's going on but they don't show it. Maybe the adopters can break through this," Kash said. He added that in the ten years of its existence in the United States "the universal experience is that it almost always helps. Adopt-a-Patient shortens a patient's stay and provides an inducement to get out."

Political Advertisement

Political Advertisement

from
PARISH TO PUBLIC FORUM
SUSAN IRELAND
IS
Interested in People



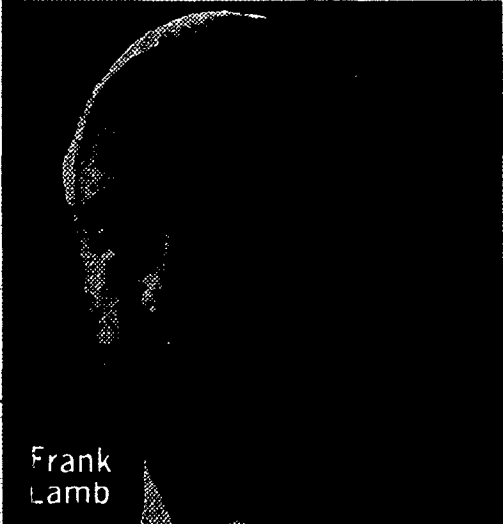
Monroe County Legislative Candidate
Wheatland/Riga/Ogden/Sweden

Endorsed by Women's Political Caucus

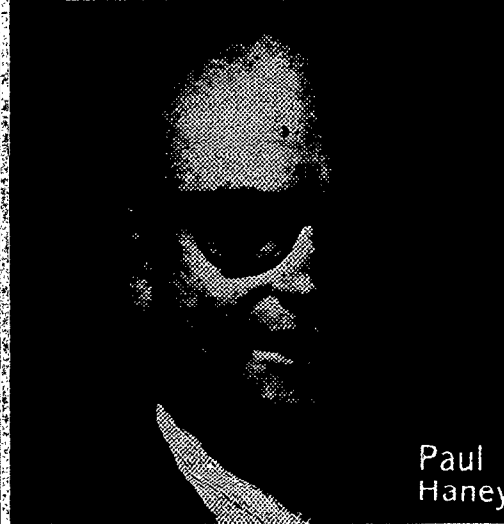
Paid for by Susan Ireland Campaign Fund and Sweden Democratic Party

Political Advertisement

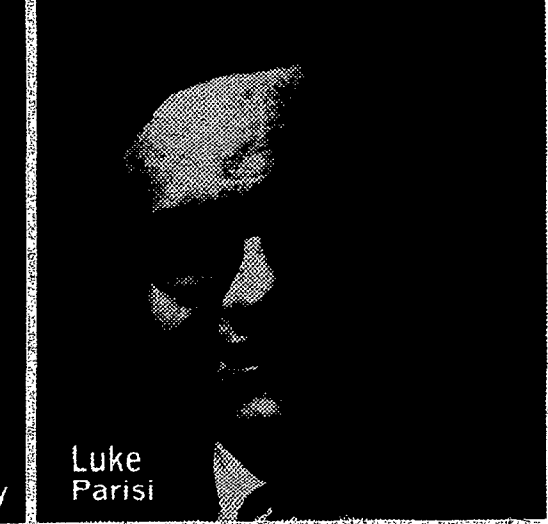
Political Advertisement



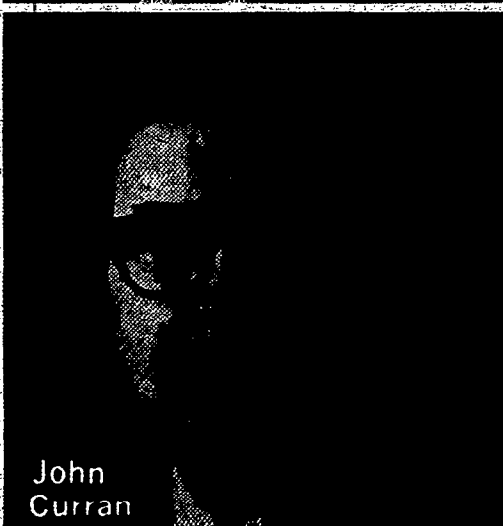
Frank Lamb



Paul Haney



Luke Parisi



John Curran



Midge Costanza

Business In The Diocese

John R. Hennessy, vice president and manager of the Financial Planning Department of Marine Midland Bank - Rochester, is the newly elected vice president and treasurer of both Marine Midland Leasing Corporation and Maine Midland Realty Credit Corporation.

He is a member of St. Louis Church in Pittsford.



WHY DOES EVERYDAY SEEM LIKE FRIDAY?

Elect the good government team.

This year, five strong individuals are seeking election as your representatives to City Council. Each brings to the people of the City of Rochester a special area of expertise & knowledge. They know the problems of the City because they deal with them daily, in their neighborhoods and their business. Their concerns are for the people and they are determined to work together to bring about positive solutions to City problems.

Each of the five candidates presented here have proven that they have the understanding, concern, experience and abilities to work with other strong and capable people as part of a good government team.

Now it's up to you. You have the power to change things, now, to help improve your City. You can make that change on Election Day. On November 6, elect all five members of the Good Government Team to City Council.

Democrats for City Council

Monroe County Democratic Committee: Laurence Kirwan, Chairman.