

# Office of Human Development

The Office of Human Development (OHD) initiated several new programs during the year, and the last two members of the original OHD staff left for new positions.

Sisters Frances Sweeney and Grace Miller, part of the founding staff in 1967, were the last of the original staffers at the office. Sister Frances is a pastoral assistant at Holy Redeemer and Sister Grace is resuming studies.

New initiatives during the year included an effort to give staff time to the regions for advice and assistance on programs of interest to the region. Father Charles Mulligan, OHD director, said that both the regional and Rochester-based staff worked with regional coordinators.

An internship program also was begun, making it possible for persons interested in a church program of social ministry to get experience. Father Mulligan said. So far, two sisters and one lay person have participated in the program.

The regional activities of OHD were reorganized during the year, forming a Northern Tier of Wayne, Ontario, Yates, Seneca and Cayuga counties, served by Father George Wiant in Palmyra and Sister Alice McLaughlin in Clifton Springs, and an Appalachian Tier served by Sister Mary Kruckow in Hornell and Father Neil Miller in Elmira. Monroe and Livingston counties are served from the Rochester office.

Father Mulligan also noted that he has acted to decentralize the leadership of the Office of Human Development, forming a board which shares policy making decision with the director.

Evaluating the purposes of OHD, Father Mulligan said that the office works to "provide support and guidance, and to bring the liberating and healing message of Christ to people. 'Where there is a community of the faithful,' he explained, 'life should be better for everyone.'

Acknowledging that "society will always be imperfect," he said that OHD reaches out with hope to persons in need. That means that OHD works on "everything from apathy in politics to world hunger," he said.

Looking to the future, Father Mulligan said that he would like to have more regional staff, and would like to become involved in two



FATHER MULLIGAN

areas presently untouched, alcoholism and "industrial mission," the latter making business leaders aware of their responsibilities to the community.

OHD has 13 staff members, and a budget of \$93,579.

Referring to budget, he noted that "giving us money is not the solution," but the public should make "wise and loving decisions about the use of its own resources."

Speaking of the OHD staff, he said that involvement in the Church is important, and that it is necessary for the staff to "know what they are doing and be reflective in their faith" and not "just be social workers."

OHD staff members are responsible for a wide range of activities during the past year, as related by Father Mulligan.

An intercultural workshop for school staffs, both Catholic and public, was sponsored by OHD, the Department of Education and the Spanish Apostolate during the past year through the efforts of Sister Grace Miller. She was involved in the formation of the Office of Black Ministries, which came into being during the year. She also worked to organize the inner city parishes to plan for future ministry needs.

Sister Judith Reger co-chaired a committee on high rise senior citizen housing, working with managers, tenants and fire officials on fire safety. The effort resulted in changes at some buildings to increase the safety of the tenants. The committee also is examining general tenant safety.

She also was involved in the minimal ministry standards for

nursing homes which have been implemented in the diocese.

Sister Frances Sweeney prepared a profile of 23 of the candidates in the 1975 Monroe County Legislature election and held meetings so people could become familiar with the candidates and the issues. Her successor, Tim McGowan, organized the voter registration drive during June, in which 72 per cent of the parishes in the diocese participated.

Eighteen parish human development committees were trained during the year with a newly written course. Kevin Cullen followed up with an evaluation of the program.

More, the monthly bulletin issued by OHD, has 800 paid subscribers. Judy Wehrin, who edits it, also produced a new brochure for the office and conducted a study, funded by Catholic Charities, on the effects of unemployment on a person's relationship with banks, utilities, and other organizations.

Father Neil Miller opened the Appalachian Tier office June 23, 1976, and since has become involved in food stamps in both Chemung and Steuben counties. Father George Wiant reports progress in organizing the Yates-Ontario-Wayne Campaign for Human Development task force and the development of a regional human development team. Sister Mary Kruckow worked on a workshop at Watson Homestead in October, 1975, and conducted a followup session in Corning in February, 1976. Sister Alice McLaughlin reports her activities in organizing parish and regional human development committees, and that she is averaging about four requests for emergency assistance a month.

On Jan. 1, 1977, Father Charles Mulligan will assume the post of Director of Social Ministry. The new position will place the Office of Human Development, Catholic Charities, the Peace and Justice Commission, the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation, the hospital chaplains and the prison chaplains under one directorship.


Father Mulligan said that the new position is an important move so the social ministry organizations of the diocese can coordinate their efforts for the benefit of all. He noted that the human services offered by Catholic Charities are vital, and that the organizational functions of the Office of Human Development need to be aware of human service, which he hopes the new relationship caused by the position will accomplish.

The chaplains, who formerly were responsible directly to the bishop, need a support structure. Father Mulligan noted, citing the fact that in 11 county jails in the diocese, parish priests have been asked to serve as chaplains with little training or support. In the new position, he intends to form a jail chaplains group, and to work with the existing hospital chaplains organization.

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