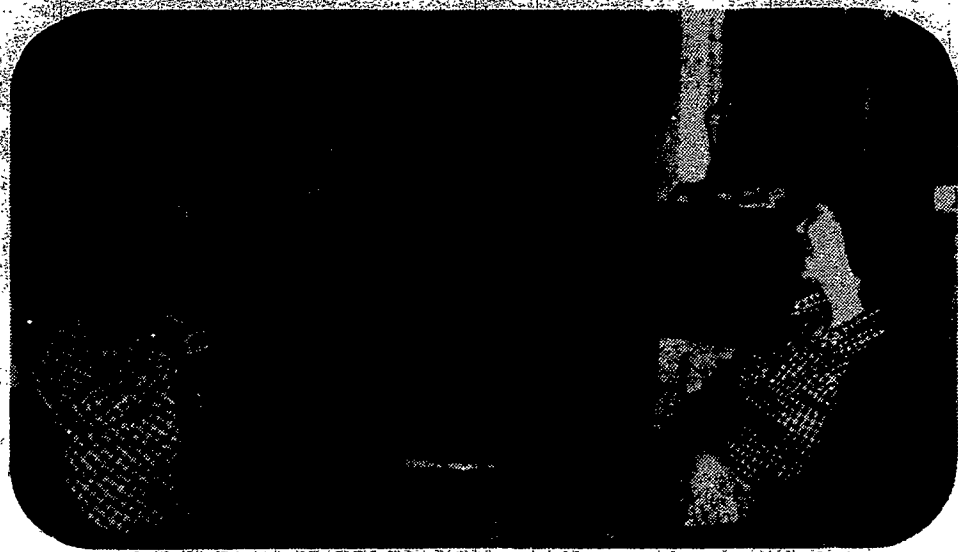
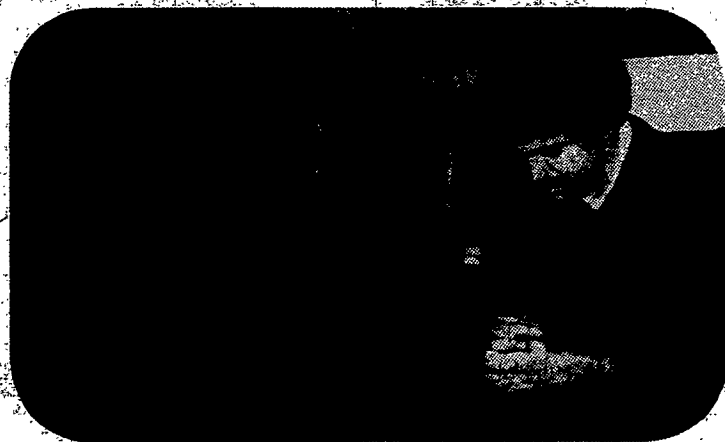


Ice skating was an out of town adventure for the group at Casey Park, Auburn. From left: Lynn Treuchler, Engels, Alison Venuti, Laurie Herrick, John Eddy and an unidentified onlooker.



Members relax around the piano.



Moments of reflection are built into the program as the spiritual aspect goes along with the fun and service elements.



Mark Frey thinks the center can also be a "perfect place to do-nothing."

Ministry in Action

stone through adolescence to a new commitment to the parish and Christian concerns."

The youth ministry program was initiated because of the threatened closure of DeSales High School two years ago. DeSales remains open, but the parish council committed itself to the youth ministry concept by hiring Engels. Geneva's New Haven has a Youth Action Council, a core group, that helps govern and maintain the center's program and service. The ultimate accountability is to the parish youth committee and Father Torney.

"The ministry is here to serve the Catholic youth of St. Stephen's and St. Francis, but by nature of the job, we welcome all," said Engels.

Membership requirements are minimal, but serve to define the community it serves and to prevent gate crashing. Prospective members must make "an effort" to join as Engels interviews applicants' expectations. Members can bring two guests to events and a minimal cover charge helps share expenses.

The idea for the center grew out of Engels survey of the youth, professionals and parents. It was felt youth needed a place. The lime green walls were the young members contribution during clean up and painting stages. Supervision for planned activities is drawn from a pool of 40 adult volunteers.

A lot goes on here between the lines, the popcorn and kidding around. Interaction between youth and adults with a Christian oriented atmosphere is building a sense of community. The center extends into the general community through its service and recreational activities. A recent fund raising spaghetti supper elicited considerable approval from parishioners who observed the spirit of togetherness.

"I challenge anyone to say we are not coming to God here," said Engels. "For many it is the only "Church" they know. Our job is to bring the youth into a personal relationship with Christ. How do we go about it? Start where the kids are at."

A knock on the door! Hi, I'm John Engels, come on in!



Members Steve Carten, John Oughterson, Dan Kane, and adult staffer, Bob Taney play cards at the center.



Members from Geneva's New Haven visit Margaret Ayers Nursing Home, Geneva, once each month.