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# COURIER-JOURNAL

## Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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### Well Child Clinic Filling Area Needs

By Martin Toombs  
 Southern Tier Editor

Owego— In its second year of operation, the Tioga County Well Child Clinic has expanded to five sites and nine days a month of clinic services to county children from birth to five years of age.

Begun with the assistance of two Campaign for Human Development (CHD) grants and the voluntary services of a group of local residents now totaling 40 persons, the Well Child Clinic is providing preventative health services to 400 children.

Co-directors are Donna Mundt and Rose Marie Kushner, both family nurse practitioners. Another of the staff members has been Mary Alice Wolcott, a dental hygienist.

They explained that one difficulty they had starting the program was convincing people that there was a need. Last fall when they opened a clinic in Owego, they had trouble finding a location, as groups would tell them that the service really wasn't needed.

But right now they have a

waiting list of 25 children for the next Owego clinic, they noted.

The group first opened clinics in the county's most rural areas, Berkshire and Halsey Valley in October 1978. Candor was added last February, and then Waverly and Owego in September. Mrs. Mundt explained that their "main philosophy" was to "help the rural parts of the county," and that is why they left the villages for later expansion.

As women discuss the services they provide, they point out the scarcity of many health services in the county. There is no obstetrics unit at the one hospital in the county, which means that in order to receive pre-natal care women usually must travel outside the county, some many miles. Others simply don't get the care.

The women also noted that Tioga County is one of only two or three in the state which doesn't have county government operated well child clinics. Mrs. Mundt commented that newcomers to the area ask where the well child clinic is, and the local people often respond by asking what a well child

clinic is.

Dentists are located only in Owego and Waverly, Ms. Wolcott points out, and dental care in the schools also is lacking. She noted that two children she examined recently had lost nearly all their teeth at the age of three. Of the 191 she has screened, being those above age three in the program, 41 percent had tooth decay. Among many of the families that use the clinic, she said, "dental care is usually their last priority."

Mrs. Kushner also pointed out that in their tests for anemia, 27 percent of the children have been shown anemic, and another 41 percent are borderline. The children are treated and monitored monthly to see that the situation improves.

She also pointed out that the county now has a Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program which is the "real way to deal with the problem." The program, being administered by the Tioga Opportunities Program, is a supplemental feeding program for pregnant women, nursing mothers and children to age five. Mrs. Kushner noted that they have referred 81



Three of the leaders of the Tioga Well Child Clinic are, from left, Donna Mundt, Mary Alice Wolcott and Rose Marie Kushner.

children to the WIC program.

The clinic received a \$9,997 CHD grant this year, and that has put the clinic on a sound footing, Mrs. Kushner explained. They have kept expenses low, she noted, and have no paid employees. The grant made it possible for them to buy equipment and they don't expect to need replacements for some time. Donations and other sources should be able to sustain the program, she said.

Now incorporated as Rural Health Associates, the group is making an application for a national CHD grant to begin new preventative services. Especially of interest is a pre-

natal care and pediatrics.

In addition to the program's outreach to the poor and the medically underserved in the county, the program also has helped another group of "powerless" people, Mrs. Kushner noted.

Attracted to the program from the beginning have been a large group of skilled persons, mostly women, who had been unable to find a place to use their training in the area. Nurses, pre-school teachers, trained screening personnel, social workers and dental hygienists are among those who have come forward. Recently, she noted, she got a call from a nutritionist who wants to assist.

"People have helped us in different ways," Mrs. Kushner noted, from a woman donating her administrative skills to another in Halsey Valley who opens the Methodist Church there and gets it warmed up for their arrival.

The low-pressure atmosphere with people working together is important to the clinics, Mrs. Kushner said. And, she noted, in the short time the clinics have been available, many local persons have come to depend on them. She concluded by stating that the program was exactly what was needed for both the volunteers and the persons receiving the service.

### Bp. Clark to Address Unity Prayer Service

Elmira— Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be the homilist for the annual Christian Unity Week observance in Elmira Sunday, Jan. 20.

In its 15th year, the Elmira observance of the international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-25, will be at Christ's United Methodist Church, 330 W. Church St., beginning at 7:30 p.m.

### St. James Official Elected to Post

Hornell— William Connors, associate administrator of St. James Mercy Hospital, has been elected chairman of the board of directors of Empire 9, Regional Emergency Medical Services Program, Inc., a system which serves 23 hospitals, ambulance services, fire departments, rescue squads and law enforcement agencies with emergency medical service in nine counties: Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates.

The theme for the prayer service will be "Your Kingdom Come."

Music will be provided by the Cantata Singers, and a reception will follow the service. Child care also will be available. A collection taken up as part of the service will be divided between Second Place East in Elmira and the Southern Tier Office of Human Development.

Funded by the counties and hospitals, Empire 9 sponsors training programs covering a multitude of needs and skill levels. Empire 9 also offers assistance in staging, planning and evaluation of disaster plan rehearsals and makes films and training aids available to civic groups in the region.

Connors noted that emergency medical service training programs are given to approximately 1,000 men and women each year, providing them with information about new technology and equipment.

### Town Meeting

The Chemung-Schuyler Town meeting, Jan. 21, will begin with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark at 7:30 p.m. at St. Casimir Church in Elmira. The meeting will follow in the parish hall.

### Membership Drive Set

Elmira— The Chemung County Council for the Aging, Inc., is conducting its annual membership drive during January. The council is a non-profit organization staffed by volunteers to promote the needs of the older adult population of Chemung County.

Membership support — from persons of all ages — makes it possible for the work to continue.

All contributions to the council are tax deductible. Membership applications can be obtained by telephoning 737-2914.

### Grant Awarded

Elmira— St. Joseph's Hospital has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from the cancer control project of the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group. St. Joseph's is a group member through its affiliation with Roswell Park Memorial Institute.

The Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group is a national research organization comprising more than 30 major medical centers and 100 hospitals. The cancer control project has been established to ensure quality care of the cancer patient in community hospitals.

### Notre Dame at Milestone

Elmira— Preparations are under way for the next event in the year-long celebration by Notre Dame High School of its 25th anniversary.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be the principal celebrant and homilist for a Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, Feb. 10 at 4 p.m. in the Notre Dame auditorium.

In addition to a general invitation to the public to attend the Mass, the school's 3,000 graduates will receive mailed invitations.

The first event marking the anniversary was the Homecoming football game last fall. A cultural program is being planned for the spring.

Sister Judith Heberle,

superior general of the Sisters of Mercy which operate the school, will give a reception Saturday evening, Feb. 9, for many of those who have actively worked to support the school.

And a dinner on Sunday will honor the faculty, graduates of the school who have religious vocations and local clergy.

### Tioga Parishes Plan Talks

Owego— A three-week program titled "Sacraments for Today's Catholic Family" is under way in Tioga County.

Organized by the Tompkins-Tioga Regional Religious Education Coordinators, Anne and John Daly of Owego, the program includes presentations by three priests in three parishes.

### Alcoholism Seminar

Elmira— Thomas A. Page, alcoholism counselor in the Southern Tier Alcoholism Rehabilitation Center, will moderate a panel discussion on long term alcoholism treatment programs at the Alcoholism Seminar Thursday, Jan. 17, in St. Joseph's Hospital's Doctors Meeting Room. The program will begin at 12:15 p.m.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Social Work-STARs office at 733-5519.

The program began Thursday, Jan. 10, and will continue each of the next two Thursdays; each program begins at 8 p.m. and ends at 10 p.m.

The three priests involved in the program each gave their presentations in their own parish Jan. 10. Father Elmer Schmidt, St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, is speaking on the sacraments of initiation. Father Eugene Weis, St. John the Evangelist, Newark Valley, is speaking on the sacraments of healing, and Father Albert Cason, St. Patrick's, Owego, is speaking on the sacraments of vocation.

During the next two weeks, each will present his talk at the other parishes in the program.

The schedule at St. John the Evangelist began with Father Weis, and will continue Jan. 17 with Father Cason and end Jan. 24 with Father Schmidt.

At St. Patrick's, Father Schmidt will give his presentation Jan. 17, and Father Weis will conclude the series Jan. 24.

At St. Margaret Mary's, Father Weis will give his talk Jan. 17 and Father Cason will end there Jan. 24.

Any interested persons are welcome.

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