

**Thanks Giving Appeal '86**

**Grant program helps get new ministries off the ground**

By Teresa A. Parsons

A little bit of money makes a big difference when it's applied in the right place at the right time.

At Annunciation School in Rochester, a \$4,000 one-time grant in 1985/86 helped establish a thriving latchkey program. In its second season, the program is not only breaking even, but is already earning extra money to fund other school programs.

With a \$3,200 grant in the same year, Catholic Family Center's STAR program for the handicapped began offering transportation, friendly visiting, help with shopping and light housekeeping to disabled persons. Despite little publicity, the program attracted more than 40 clients in a single year.

A program for women seeking to escape the lifestyle of prostitution, a restaurant renovated and operated by ex-offenders, a westside daycare center — each are dreams that are alive thanks in part to a small grant from a little-known group called Ventures in Human Services.

A committee of representatives from diocesan social-service agencies, religious congregations, and urban and suburban parishes, Ventures specializes in finding programs that are innovative, that address unmet needs and that serve the poor.

Grants — which last year ranged from \$1,000-5,000 — are small by program standards and are limited to three years.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Thanks to a one-time grant from Ventures in Human Services, Annunciation School's latchkey program is self-supporting after only a year.

"I think that while the sums have been small, they have met the need for seed money," said Catherine Wobus, casework director for Catholic Family Center and a member of the Ventures committee. "It does really enable new ministries to get off the ground"

Aside from money, Ventures offers encouragement, technical assistance and help in finding other permanent funding sources.

"It's an opportunity to develop and try something out," said William Privett, associate director for Catholic Charities at the

Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry. "Once we see that it's working, we're often able to attract money from other sources."

In addition to the Genesee Valley office, Ventures is supported by the diocesan Division of Urban Services, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph. Catholic Family Center provides no direct funds, but offers free technical and administrative services.

While suburban parishes do not contribute directly to the Ventures fund, they do provide a link to permanent funding.

"What we have been able to do is to send verification to parishes we know are tithing that we have looked at these projects for two or three years and that they are working," Privett said.

Applications for Ventures grants are due each year in February. A committee of 10 members representing the contributing groups evaluates applications. Two or three committee members study each proposal closely and offer their recommendations to the whole group, which makes the final decision.

Each year, the committee identifies certain areas, such as child care, as funding priorities. In the northeast city neighborhood where Annunciation School is located, for instance, there are no other latchkey programs for working parents, according to Lucille Newman, who supervises the program and lives just around the corner.

Continued on Page 14

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