

Program for terminally ill to open at Corpus Christi

Volunteers needed to staff Isaiah House

By Teresa A. Parsons

Last April, Kathie Quinlan predicted that when the time was right, God would provide a house for Corpus Christi Parish's proposed home for the dying.

She hasn't been disappointed.

In April or May, Quinlan and nearly 40 co-workers plan to open the doors of Isaiah House, Corpus Christi's sixth outreach program, at 71 Prince Street.

For more than two years, organizers worked to realize their dream of opening a home where people in the last stages of terminal illness could die in comfort and dignity.

Their perseverance was rewarded at Christmas, when a parishioner gave them a house located just across the street from the parish rectory.

The house is the latest in what Quinlan described as a "tremendous outpouring" of gifts, which included everything from hospital beds to household supplies.

"Everything has come together so beautifully," said Quinlan, a registered nurse who will serve as director of the program. "It has just been one generous gesture after another."

Based on the philosophy of hospice care, which affirms life without hastening or postponing death, Isaiah House will be geared especially toward people who are homeless, destitute or unable to return to their own homes and who would otherwise spend their last days in a hospital.

"We chose a name from the Old Testament because, being an interfaith effort, we wanted something that bridged all religions," Quinlan said. "And there's so much in Isaiah to do with comforting."

The man who donated the house was a widower who had originally purchased it for

himself. He remarried last fall, and finding he no longer needed the house, the man thought of his second love — Corpus Christi's home for the dying.

With some minor modifications, the house could be ready to open in several weeks. The hospice will accommodate two terminal patients at a time.

The only hurdle that remains to be crossed is recruiting enough volunteers to staff the house 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Quinlan, a registered nurse, will serve as director. Sister Arlene Helgut, SSJ, will work part-time as business administrator.

In addition, Quinlan estimates that she needs more than 100 volunteers, each of whom will be needed to work a four-hour shift at least once a month. She has divided volunteer services into five categories: direct caregivers, housekeeping, business and organization, transportation and maintenance, and support for families.

"We hope to have at least two volunteers on duty at all times," she said. "A nurse will be present for much of each day, and there will always be one on-call."

Isaiah House also needs a volunteer medical director and as many nurses as possible, but medical experience or education is not required of those who want to help.

"Life experience counts more than anything else," Quinlan said. "We have felt all along that it's truly a privilege to be in the presence of the dying. We really think that Isaiah House will minister to us as we attempt to minister to others."

Those who care directly for the residents will be asked to attend a training session. The first session is scheduled Friday evening and Saturday, February 20 and 21. At least two more training sessions will be offered in March and more will be scheduled as needed.

For more information, contact Kathie Quinlan at Corpus Christi Rectory, (716) 324-2525.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

In addition to director Kathie Quinlan (right) and business administrator Sister Arlene Helgut, SSJ, Isaiah House will require more than 100 volunteers to help care for two terminally ill residents around the clock.

Series to explore critical urban issues

Critical challenges facing the contemporary Church, ranging from a shortage of priests to the surplus of buildings, should provoke some stimulating conversation at a series of five roundtable discussions beginning later this month.

Sponsored by the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, the Division of Urban Ministry and hosting parishes, the series begins February 20 and continues each month through June. Each month's segment focuses on a different issue of particular interest to urban congregations.

"Most of the time, when urban church folks get together, it's to respond to a crisis," said Rebecca Gifford, associate director of urban ministry. "By taking this opportunity to reflect with one another and probe beneath what is obvious, we hope to be able to learn from our own experience and learn from one another."

On February 20, several inactive Catholics will introduce "Turned Off by the Church: Stories of Dropouts," at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1069 Joseph Avenue. St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester will host a follow-up discussion on March 27, entitled "Turned On by the Church: Stories of Returnees."

The struggle for a black Catholic identity will be one facet of a discussion entitled "Why Are You Roman Catholic?" on April 24th at St. Bridget's Church, just west of North Clinton Avenue.

"Church: a People or a Place?" will examine the dilemma of parishes struggling

to maintain buildings that no longer seem to suit their needs. The program will take place on May 15 at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 60 Lorimer Street.

The final discussion, entitled "The Priest Shortage: Crisis or Opportunity?" is scheduled June 19 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 53 Ontario Street.

Each session begins at 7 p.m. with an informal gathering and refreshments. The discussions will begin after a brief introduction at 7:30 p.m.

Organizers tried to match topics with parishes to which they would be especially relevant. However, anyone is welcome to attend and participate in any or all of the discussions.

For more information, contact Rebecca Gifford at the Division of Urban Ministry or Melissa Marquez at the Diocesan Office of Social Ministry, (716) 328-3210, or Sister Christine Wagner, SSJ, at the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, (716) 546-4894.

Young Adult Ministry to meet at Holy Name of Jesus Church

Diocesan Young Adult Ministry will sponsor an evening with Bishop Matthew H. Clark at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, St. Martin's Way, Rochester, on Monday, February 23, at 7:30 p.m.

This is an opportunity for dialogue with the Bishop for young adults (ages 18-35 and over, single or married). The topic of the conversation will be young adults and the Church.

A reception will follow.

Call (716)288-3145 for information.

Smoking withdrawal program set for United Cancer Council

United Cancer Council will sponsor an evening smoking withdrawal program beginning Tuesday, February 17, at the council office, 1441 East Ave., Rochester.

Five sessions are planned and will run from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on successive Tuesday evenings. The program, which is built around group support, emphasizes a lifestyle change in becoming a non-smoker.

Call (716)473-8230 for registration.

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