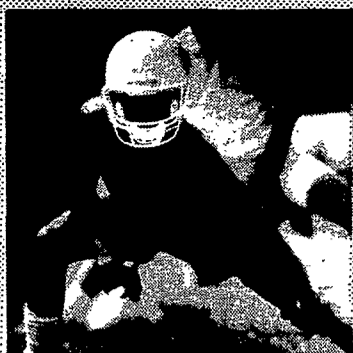




Villagers' voice

Sister Kathleen Weider accepted an invitation to return to Central America and seek support for displaced Salvadorans who want to return to their villages. See Page 3.



Sultry sessions

Beneath the scorching summer sun last week, diocesan high school football players endured double sessions to ready for the upcoming fall grid campaign. See page 16.

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Michael N. Aydogan

JUST LIKE HOME — Amy, age 4, works diligently on a coloring book as John, also 4, looks on. The two children are residents of the Morningstar foster "family" two Sisters of St. Joseph have established in half of St. Stanislaus Parish's convent. For more on the home, see page 7.

Genesis: Collaboration unites community under new name

By Teresa A. Parsons

Students, faculty, parents and pastors have collaborated to choose a new name for Rochester's west-side regional junior high school, located at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish. The resulting appellation, Genesis Catholic Junior High School, is particularly apt for a school community that, in its second year, will draw students and support from five parishes, two elementary schools and the surrounding neighborhoods.

"It certainly says a lot about the program — that we do look at it as a new beginning for ourselves as well as for students," commented Isabella Walters, a parent and school-board member. "We are struggling at building for the future, but the regional-junior-high concept is something that I believe can help salvage our school system."

The new name is likewise appropriate to Principal Thomas Bahr's hope that learning will remain a creative process that's not reserved for students alone.

"Genesis to me is what the school is, a beginning, a hope for the future," he said. "We're in changing times for diocesan schools, and it seems fitting to have a name that reflects that."

Bahr's only regret was that the regional junior high couldn't have started its first year with a new name. "Our children are coming from

other parishes," he observed. "For us to zoom in on one parish by referring to (the school) as Our Lady of Good Counsel was not right."

In anticipation of the second year, he opted to use a process whereby the name change would involve as many people as possible. Members of the junior high's Student Council Formation Committee began the naming process last year by soliciting suggestions from fellow students, pastors, parents, teachers and principals. The student committee had winnowed the suggested names to four options by April, 1987. After seeking reaction to the four names by means of a survey of diocesan officials, teachers, parents, pastors and students, committee members narrowed the choice to two, St. Stephen's or Genesis Junior High.

In June, 1987, Genesis emerged as the winner of a final vote taken among students. The question of who originally suggested the name remains under dispute, but Bahr considers that yet another indication of the name's appropriateness. The word "Catholic" was added at the behest of several parents, but the inclusion won positive reviews among pastors as well.

The new name was submitted this summer for the approval of Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the pastors of the five participating parishes. At both diocesan and parish levels, approval was granted.

Not everyone is pleased by the final choice, however. Father Louis Sirianni expected some negative reactions when he announced the name change to parishioners his at Good Counsel last weekend. "People who have been in the parish for their entire lives might be a bit upset that their alma mater has changed," he said. "Parents who've sent their kids all the way through the school may also be a little upset that (students) won't graduate from the school with the same name." Yet overall, he added, "I don't think I will hear a lot of complaints."

Others, for whom tradition was not at stake, have observed unhappily that Genesis reminds them of the popular rock band or a local Salvation Army-run home for runaway youths.

But Bahr believes that the word's incidental uses should not spoil its rich religious connotations. "If you can get at what the word means in the Bible, that's what we meant," he said. "The people who are upset with it will get used to it, and the people who love it will buy into it."

Not unlike the narrative in the Book of Genesis, a history of the regional junior high's first year would include plenty of drama and some stormy moments. "We had some tough meetings, asking 'Can we afford this?'" Bahr

Continued on Page 14



C-J file photo
Students will soon cross this threshold at the newly renamed Genesis Catholic Junior High School.