

Local News

Study calls for county-wide coalition to serve homeless

By Lee Strong

A local task force on the homeless has recommended that the Rochester community create a Monroe County coalition to coordinate a comprehensive, year-round approach to addressing the problems of homeless people.

In addition, the task force says agencies providing services for the homeless need to make greater efforts to reach out to the community's homeless population by going to where homeless people are rather than waiting for them to come for assistance.

These are among the recommendations contained in Beyond Bed and Breakfast: Final Recommendations from the Mental Health Association's Task Force on the Homeless. These proposals are based on data from the task force's February, 1988 report, Rochester's Homeless Population: Numbers, Characteristics, Needs, Service Gaps.

The most recent report also recommends that the greater Rochester community provide: expanded alcohol and substance abuse programs; drop-in programs designed to serve the homeless population; a facility with five to seven beds for the hard-to-place homeless; a permanent, 24-hour facility offering a limited number of year-round beds; and low-income housing in suburbs and surrounding towns.

The final report provides a blueprint for a community response to the problems of the homeless, according to task force spokesman William Privett.

"I think this study tells us what we need to do," said Privett, director of the Diocese of Rochester's Catholic Family Center. "If we implement the recommendations, five years from now we can have a system of care for homeless people. I would not want to picture Rochester in five years if we do nothing."

"The study addresses more than just providing additional beds," noted Patricia Woods, program director of the Mental Health Association, which commissioned the study. "I think what the study is talking about is the support services that will help homeless people break the cycle of homelessness and re-enter society."

The final report completes more than two years of work by the task force. During that time, the group, with assistance from the Center for Governmental Research, studied the extent of Monroe County's homeless problem, revealing in its February report that the homeless are far more numerous than originally thought. According to the study, between late 1986 and late 1987 approximately 4,500 people — including about 850 children — were housed at least once in a shelter facility. On any given night an estimated 300 to 325 people required shelter.

The recommendations contained in the final report are based on the data from the first report, and on models and proposals developed by local agencies and in those in other communities.

Central to the recommendations is the formation of the coalition which would implement many of the other recommendations, Privett said.

The coalition would consist of representatives from both county and city governments, as well as from agencies providing various services to the homeless. The homeless problem involves a number of issues — including mental health, housing and social services — Privett noted, and the coalition will have the knowledge and experience to look across all these issues.

"We need one body that stays with the (homeless) issue and ensures essential services," Privett said. In addition, the coalition will be responsible for finding the resources to implement many of the other recommendations. "There is a price tag that will come with implementing the recommendations," Privett acknowledged. "We've not priced it out. That's where we see the coalition beginning its work."

"We see the coalition as an ongoing entity," Woods said. "We saw that as things evolved in the community, that (the coalition) would be there to address needs as they arise."

Both Privett and Woods noted that in addition to finding resources, the coalition will be charged with implementing some of the long-term — and controversial — recommendations. Both Privett and Woods acknowledge that some of the recommendations involve complex and delicate issues, and will require sustained effort.

Among these recommendations are the call for fair-share distribution of low-income housing in the county, including suburbs and surrounding towns, and a county-wide plan for construction of this housing. Constructing this housing would involve removal of tax and zoning barriers, and providing incentives to builders. In order to implement these recommendations, the coalition will have to work with city, county and town governments for a number of years.

"This community has to recognize that we have to provide housing for low-income people," Privett said. "We have to take preventive action to prevent the homeless population from growing."

Both Privett and Woods noted that the task force has already received encouragement from county and city government for the recommendations. "We met informally with Mayor Ryan and County Executive Frey," Privett reported. "I'm convinced in those discussions those leaders see the recommendations as reasonable, appropriate and well-thought-out."

He added that the task force had received letters of support from the two executives and a number of county legislators. Privett also noted that action has already been taken on one of the recommendations — and that the county government has already pledged support. The Catholic Family Center has submitted a \$507,000 grant proposal to the state Homeless Housing and Assistance Program of the Department of Social Services to help finance the conversion of an abandoned warehouse at 547 Joseph Avenue into the Francis Hospitality Center, a year-round, 24-hour permanent facility.

The center will offer 20 long-term, single occupancy rooms, 17 emergency beds and such support services as mental health, drug and alcohol counseling, job assessment, literacy training. The staff will include a project manager, case workers, a part-time volunteer developer, and volunteers serving as relief and support staff.

The renovation of the warehouse will cost an estimated \$707,000, Privett said. The difference between the grant amount and the total cost — if the proposal is approved — will be raised from local contributions — including \$40,000 already received from St. Ambrose and St. Louis parishes — and a \$50,000 mortgage. According to Privett, analysts from the DSS have already visited the site and have offered informal encouragement about the success of the proposal. Privett estimates that the state will announce in late October or early November whether the grant has been approved.

Privett further noted that the proposal has received strong support from Mayor Ryan and County Manager Frey — another proposal in the task's force's recommendations. Moreover the county has agreed to enter into a contract with (the center) for an ongoing portion of the operating budget. This support will be provided through the benefits for which homeless people are eligible, Privett said, noting that the February report indicated that 60% of the people had been in contact with DSS. The department will also provide the job assessment services that will be offered in the shelter.

If the state grant comes through, the center would open in 1990, allowing the parish shelters at St. Bridget's and Blessed Sacrament to close. Corpus Christi's Dimitri House will remain in operation. Rather than looking at the change as a closing of the shelters, Privett noted, the members of the parish shelter network view it "as an evolution of our services to the homeless."

According to Privett, the facility will rely on the volunteers who staffed the parish shelter. "If the plan is approved, we hope that even though we've moved away from a church building, people will consider it a ministry," Privett said. He added that the shelter will rely on volunteers for overnight care, but that with only one site and a larger pool of volunteers, some of the burn out experienced by shelter workers in the past will be avoided.

"We think the volunteer presence is significant to the operation of the shelter," he noted.

"The volunteers have provided care to the homeless that is not just a job, and they've built up a certain level of trust with them," Woods noted that continued use of volunteers, the permanent shelter and recommended drop-in centers will all help to build trust with the homeless people. "The more opportunity there is for contact and for that trust to develop, the more opportunity there is for (the homeless) to get the help they need," she said.

Moreover, this continued contact — and the approach to dealing with the problems of the homeless — will help foster a recognition of the dignity and rights of the homeless, Privett noted.

"One way of characterizing the homeless that is unfortunate is calling them 'bums,'" Privett said. "The homeless are human beings created by God who have lost their dreams and their hope. (The approach outlined in this report) is for providing care for human beings to help them recapture those dreams."



DIocese OF ROCHESTER
1150 Buffalo Road · Rochester, NY 14624
(716) 328-3210

September 15, 1988

My dear brothers and sisters,

This Sunday, September 18th, we will observe Catechetical Sunday in our diocese and throughout the United States. On this Sunday we focus on the ministry of catechesis, the life-long process of coming to know and respond to the Word of God. We will commission the over 3,000 women and men in our parish communities formally entrusted with the faith formation of our children and adults in baptismal and marriage preparation programs, the RCIA, religious education classes, Catholic schools, youth groups and young adult gatherings.

But it is also a day that calls each of us assembled in our faith communities to probe our role as catechists in today's world. The theme for this year, "Sow Justice, Reap Peace," flows from the Scripture readings of the day and highlights the dimension of catechesis that calls communities to their prophetic baptismal role. It is timely in a Church whose leadership has recently issued strong pastoral statements confronting global issues of violence, oppression and poverty.

Sowing justice and reaping peace in today's world is a difficult task. The life styles and attitudes demanded in this call require radical conversion. Catechetical ministry is more than imparting knowledge; it must involve modeling to persons of all ages, attitudes and life styles that sow the seeds of peace and justice in their hearts.

Catechists bear a great responsibility to be effective witnesses by actively promoting justice and peace, not merely talking about it. They must provide for those entrusted to their care experiences in living the Gospel values and developing a deep faith.

Please join with me in thanking those who so generously serve in the catechetical ministry in our diocese, and let us pray for one another that we may proclaim and live the Gospel of justice and peace.

Your brother in Christ,

Matthew H. Clark

+Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

ANTIQU & CLASSIC
CAR SHOW



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18
106 West Main Street
(airport runway behind the Ford Dealership)
HONEOYE FALLS

CAR SHOW BEGINS AT 9:00 A.M.

FREE ADMISSION FOR SHOW VEHICLES
FREE SPECTATOR ADMISSION

Hosted by
EV LEWIS FORD & THE HONEOYE FALLS ROTARY

- Classes
1. Antique 1900-1927
2. Antique 1928-1938
3. Antique 1939-1949
4. Antique 1950-1955
5. Antique 1956-1963
6. Production 1964-1968
7. Production 1969-1973
8. Production 1974-1980
9. Production 1981 & Up
10. Commercial Up to 1962
11. Commercial 1963 & Up
12. Four Wheel Drive
13. Street Rods (Prewar)
14. Custom & Modified Postwar to '69
15. Custom & Modified 1970 to date
16. Sport Cars
17. Corvettes
18. Thunderbirds 1955 to 1957
19. Fire Equipment
20. National Winners

RULES OF THE SHOW

To be eligible for Award, all vehicles must be driven on the show field by 12:00 noon.

DASH PLAQUES FOR EVERY ENTRY

Trophy presentation at 3:00 p.m.
1st, 2nd, 3rd in all Classes (Except Class 20)
Trophies given to all AACA National 1st(Class 20)

SPECIAL AWARDS:

- SHOW COMMITTEE'S AWARD
BEST OF SHOW - presented by HONEOYE FALLS ROTARY
BEST OF CHEVROLET - presented by MOYLE CHEVROLET, Honeoye Falls
BEST OF GENERAL MOTORS (EXCLUDING CHEVROLET) - presented by ELMER SCHMIDT BUICK, Honeoye Falls
BEST OF CHRYSLER - presented by RUTH ROBERTS CHRYSLER-PLYMOUTH, Honeoye Falls
BEST OF FORD - presented by EV LEWIS FORD, Honeoye Falls
BEST OF MERCURY - presented by W.C. BECKER & SONS, Hemlock
BEST OF AMC - presented by LORD'S AUTOMOTIVE, Avon

ALL OF THE ABOVE AWARDS
PRESENTED BY EV LEWIS FORD
CAR SHOW BEGINS AT 9:00 A.M.

FLEA MARKET SPACE AVAILABLE
NO EXHIBITOR FEE. BUY & SELLATION MADE TO
HONEY FALLS, NY. ALL VENDORS MUST BE
APPROVED. ALL FLEA MARKET VENDORS
SHOULD RESERVE SPACE IN ADVANCE.

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED BY THE HONEOYE FALLS ROTARY

CAR SHOW REGISTRATION and FLEA MARKET REGISTRATION forms with fields for Name, Address, City, Zip, Make of Vehicle, and Type of Merchandise.

EV LEWIS FORD FORD

Mail to:
EVERETT M. LEWIS, INC.
P.O. BOX 231
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