

Holy Family to house junior high next year

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Holy Family School, which currently houses grades pre-kindergarten to six, will add grades seven and eight next fall, following a diocesan decision announced on Wednesday, March 1.

The expansion results from the planned closing of Our Lady of Good Counsel/Genesis Catholic Junior High in June of this year — a move decided upon by both schools' boards, but still awaiting Bishop Matthew H. Clark's approval.

School board members from Genesis and Good Counsel have also voted to merge with Holy Family. Students from Good Counsel, which houses grades K-6, and Genesis, which houses grades seven and eight, are being encouraged to register at Holy Family for next fall, according to officials at both schools.

Holy Family, a regional elementary school at 899 Jay St., also draws students from St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua and Holy Apostles parishes. Good Counsel's K-5 students have been registering at Holy Family since Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Sister Roberta Tierney, director of the diocesan Division of Education, said the decision to open a junior high program at Holy Family was grounded in a desire to keep families from Good Counsel/Genesis together.

Blessed Sacrament Junior High, on the city's southeast side, had also been considered as a possible site to which Good Counsel/Genesis students might transfer, but Sister Tierney said the diocese chose Holy Family to keep a diocesan "presence" on the city's west side.

She also noted that Blessed Sacrament was targeted for closing in June, 1990, by a proposal from the Northeast Quadrant

Planning Board, and that sending Good Counsel/Genesis students to Holy Family, rather than Blessed Sacrament, would smooth the transitional period until the Southwest Planning Board releases its own consolidation plan.

Monroe County's Catholic school system is divided into four quadrants, and Good Counsel/Genesis lies in the southwest quadrant. Quadrant planning boards have been working on plans to consolidate Catholic schools throughout Monroe County, but so far only the northeast's board has announced its plan, which would close six schools in its region, including Blessed Sacrament, and establish a junior high program on the premises of Bishop Kearney High School.

Sister Lorraine Burns, SSND, Holy Family principal, emphasized that the Southwest Quadrant Planning Board hasn't released its own proposal regarding conso-

lidation. She remarked that the decision to transfer Good Counsel/Genesis students to Holy Family was "the best solution for the present time."

Thomas Bahr, Good Counsel/Genesis principal, said that Holy Family's new program would not duplicate what Genesis offered, but would probably be more akin to a standard junior high curriculum. Genesis has featured an "enriched" program, including instruction in Spanish and French, and multiple levels of math and language arts classes.

Some of Holy Family's new curriculum may be taught in the Good Counsel/Genesis school building, located at 630 Brooks Ave., Bahr noted, although details have yet to be worked out. A Genesis school board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday evening, March 7, at which time parish and school officials will discuss the plan in detail, he said.

Regional focus bodes well for DeSales

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

GENEVA — Sports teams at DeSales High School are called the Saints. A better name might be the Phoenixes.

Like the mythical bird, the school has risen from the ashes of its own apparent death.

In January, 1975, DeSales' board of trustees announced that the school would close at the end of the 1974/75 school year. But parents organized a Save our School campaign, raising more than \$100,000 in pledges, and in March of that same year, the board reversed its decision.

Since then, the school has struggled to survive, mounting annual fundraising drives, even as the school's enrollment steadily plummeted from more than 600 in the 1960s to a current enrollment of 140 students.

Nevertheless, officials at the school are optimistic about the future. "I have no doubts about the longevity of the school," said Edward Tracey, DeSales' principal since 1975. "I know that we're going to be here into the 21st century."

In recent months, however, Catholic parents in the Finger Lakes region have been watching with growing concern the process of reorganizing Catholic schools in Monroe County, and in particular the proposed closing of schools.

To help reassure these parents that Catholic education in the Finger Lakes will continue, Edward Smaldone, Jr., chairman of the school's board of trustees, contacted Father John Mulligan, vicar general of the Diocese of Rochester. In a Feb. 13 response to Smaldone, Father Mulligan wrote that recent announcements of school

reorganization concern only Monroe County schools, and that the focus on school planning will not shift to the Finger Lakes region until late 1989 or early 1990.

The vicar general also assured Smaldone that DeSales will be factored into planning for the Finger Lakes region, and that the diocese will be looking at how to best "utilize our resources to strengthen these schools in order to maintain Catholic school education, K-12 as part of a well integrated catechetical plan."

Smaldone noted that the letter is what school officials had hoped for. "The diocese has said you will have Catholic education, K-12," he remarked. "We're at the point where we don't care if the 'thing' is called DeSales High School. We just want to ensure the people of the Finger Lakes have access to Catholic education."

That "access" may or may not include DeSales, Father Mulligan cautioned. "We're not going to close DeSales," he said, "but it doesn't mean we're guaranteeing it into the 21st century."

Still, school officials remain convinced that the school will figure into those plans in some way.

They point to enrollment projections for next year, which show the first rise since the early 1970s. Growing enrollment in the lower grades at the consolidated St. Stephen's/St. Francis DeSales Elementary School in Geneva also leads school officials to be optimistic about a broader base for recruitment.

Meanwhile, in the last decade, the area the school serves has doubled to encompass 18 separate school districts. During that time, the student body has changed from primarily Geneva-based to evenly di-



vided between Geneva and the outlying areas.

In addition, Tracey pointed out that the school now receives funding from four parishes: St. Francis DeSales and St. Stephen's in Geneva on a monthly basis, and St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls and St. Mary's in Waterloo on a less frequent but still regular basis. Tracey predicted that other parishes would begin to contribute.

"It seems the whole regional aspect has taken root now," Tracey said. "We're looked upon as a Catholic school, not a parochial school."

This regional, Catholic approach to education is the thrust of diocesan planning, Tracey said, and thus the school will fit into those plans.

Sister Virginia Steinwachs, SS, who is one of the facilitators of the Finger Lakes cluster planning group, sounds a more cautious note.

"DeSales is the only high school in the region, and we certainly don't want to lose it," she said. "But sometimes the best intentions are undermined by the realities of enrollment and finances."

McQuaid recovers stolen items

Brighton police arrested three brothers Wednesday, March 1, in connection with a January burglary at McQuaid Jesuit High School.

Daniel Spoor, 24, Kenneth Spoor, 20, and Kevin Spoor, also 20, of 55 Darwin St., Rochester, have been charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree grand larceny, according to Brighton Police Lt. Gary Printy.

Teachers at McQuaid discovered Tuesday morning, Jan. 31, that more than

\$8,000 worth of computer and electronic equipment were missing from several classrooms and offices.

All of the equipment stolen from McQuaid, with the exception of one television set, was reportedly recovered last week when, acting on a tip, police obtained a warrant to search the Spoor brothers' Darwin Street home.

Officials at McQuaid declined to confirm whether any of the Spoor brothers had attended or graduated from the school.

tional administrator since 1985.

Also elected Saturday were four councilors, who will serve with Sister Miller as the congregation's administrative team. They are: Sister Judith Heberle, who recently resigned as principal of Our Lady of Mercy High School; Sister Kathleen Milliken, who will continue as a councilor; Sister Gaye Moorehead, a lawyer and children's advocate; and Sister Joyce McGinn, the congregation's treasurer.

Mercy sisters elect administrative team

The Sisters of Mercy of the Diocese of Rochester have elected Sister Ann Miller, RSM, as their new major superior.

Sister Miller was chosen on Saturday, March 4, by members of the congregation to serve a four-year term beginning June 4, 1989. She will succeed Sister Jean Marie Kearse, RSM. A former elementary school principal and assistant superintendent in the diocesan Department of General Education, Sister Miller has been a congrega-

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