

# Agency never stronger, board says

To the editors:

The Catholic Family Center has never been stronger! The article in last week's *Catholic Courier* (June 20: "Firing reveals divisions at agency") has presented a distorted picture to its readers — we want to set the record straight.

As the members of the Board of Catholic Family Center, we are deeply concerned with the portrayal of Catholic Family Center as an agency in turmoil and conflict. This could not be farther from the truth. As a Board, we work cooperatively with one another and are in full support and solidarity with our Executive Director and the staff.

The central issue of Catholic identity is quite complex, and needs reasoned and charitable discussion rather than the polemics reported in your article. The questions raised are being faced by Catholic universities, health care and human service agencies across the country. These institutions and agencies are caught in the middle; perceived by many to be too secular, too responsive to governmental regulations and requests, and too preoccupied with business concepts. While others, often employees, clients and funders, consider them to be too sectarian.

These agencies, including Catholic Family Center, are in the difficult position of being held accountable by the church, by



the public, and by the government. To carry out the church's mission of service and advocacy, it is no longer possible for Catholic Family Center to isolate itself from the society in which we live.

Catholic Family Center is a pro-life agency offering services and education which promote alternatives to abortion as well as a full range of human services. Pro-life activities are far broader than anti-abortion activities. Specifically, we work to promote the pro-life agenda through the following programs and activities:

- Outreach to women engaged in the lifestyle of prostitution.
- Mom and Baby Birth Fund
- A fund to financially support unwed mothers through the pre-natal stage and delivery.

- An educational campaign through radio announcements and posters encouraging young women to consider adoption when faced with an unexpected pregnancy.

- Development and support of parish pro-life network including over 40 parishes.

- Annual Abortion Healing Service.
- Residential drug treatment for pregnant women and women with young children.
- Preventive services for families to prevent child abuse.
- Unwed parent services.
- Adoption services.
- Advocacy for persons with disabilities.
- Housing and housing assistance for men and women without homes.
- Support services for the elderly to remain in their homes.

The list of services and activities that promote the dignity of life could go on.

Catholic Family Center is a positive force in our community. The board and staff are united. Through dialogue, we will continue to address these difficult issues.

Paul M. Riordan, President  
Board of Directors  
Catholic Family Center

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter was signed on behalf of CFC's 29-member board of directors.

## Article emphasized voices of dissidents

To the editors:

I write regarding the front page story in your June 20th edition. I believe any newspaper has a responsibility to accurately report the news. You began the story with an editors note. In that note you say the article takes a look at the "allegations levied against Catholic Family Center and the agencies response to these charges."

I find that curious in relationship to the banner characterization of a shaking "Catholic" and a more specific headline "Firing reveals divisions at agency." Sadly your article substantiates neither.

The question of such intimate issues as right to life, loaded as it is with emotional ownership makes consensus very delicate. The programs of Catholic Family Center support life and according to your article are characterized by public sector persons as pro-life.

The programs of Catholic Family Center

help the homeless, the poor, those struggling with the effects of drugs and alcohol, those wishing to adopt and young people in search of jobs as well as help with their education and learning skills.

The points made in your article show me that the staff, current board of members and public, support Catholic Family Center as pro-life. One staff member choose a course of action and has to accept ownership for the results of any acts or actions and the concomitant affects. Board members who disagree with the stance of the agency are free to publicly respond including offering their resignation.

The article puts greater emphasis on the voice of the dissident and couches the representatives of the agency as defenders. The charge levied is supposedly that Catholic Family Center isn't Catholic. I submit to you that if Catholic means universal, the Catholic Family Center with diverse pro-

grams for peoples of all race, culture and creed is Catholic. If Catholic means Roman Catholic, the Catholic Family Center recognized by United Way as a responsible place for stewardship of funds as well as by the state and local government and diocesan funds and recognized by the same to be a Roman Catholic sponsored agency which responds to the needs of all people to lead a more productive and self determinate life is all part of a lived consistent life ethic that leads to the public recognition that we are serious supporters of the value of human life at every moment and in every day.

Patrick Fox  
Director of Youth Ministry  
Diocese of Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Fox is a member of Catholic Family Center's Board of Directors.

## Questions CFC's commitment to Jesus' message

To the editors:

I would like to respond to some allegations — cheap shots seem more appropriate — made in the *Courier's* feature article on the Catholic Family Center on June 20.

While disagreeing with some of the new directions that the Department of Justice and Peace seems to be heading in, I never declined to work on the somewhat generic goals set forth in the department's mission statement as offered in January.

As for my alleged inaccessibility, I wonder how hard anyone from CFC tried to get a hold of me unless it was around the time

of my father's death at the end of January.

What was not mentioned in the *Courier* article are the number of meetings of the Justice and Peace advisory committee that were cancelled this past winter, nor how neither agendas or minutes — when they were taken — were sent out to committee members. At the end of the last meeting I did attend, the current head of Justice and Peace asked us: "do we really want to bother to meet again?" — hardly a warm invitation to a committee that's in-place and willing to work.

But something even more serious con-

tinues to bother me.

Last fall, I requested help from Justice and Peace for the Department of Disabled at CFC because client services were being severely curtailed. I was told that it would "look too self-serving for one department to help another and that they at CFC can't bite the hand that feeds them."

With statements like this, I am seriously concerned that CFC is more worried about money than the message of Jesus.

Judy Curtin  
Green Knolls Drive  
Rochester

## Catholic Family Center can't wash its hands of controversial matters

To the editors:

We are members of the Parish Pro-Life Network, an organization with representatives from many parishes in the Diocese. We strongly protest the Catholic Family Center's firing of Ken Maher for his pro-life activism. Ken's firing is another item on the list showing that the Catholic Family Center's stand against abortion is practically non-existent.

Our Network was set up by the Catholic Family Center's Task Force on Abortion, who met for one year and established this

as a way to disseminate information to all the parishes in the Diocese. Although we were set up by the Catholic Family Center, they do not have a representative who attends our meetings, nor have they contributed any constructive ideas as to how we should go about meeting the needs of the parishes in the Diocese in the area of abortion. There has been no encouragement whatsoever.

In our opinion, the Catholic Family Center, feeling pressure that they should do "something" about abortion because

they were doing nothing, decided to set up a group of people and then dumped it on them. The issue is too controversial for them and they are afraid to lose their funding sources, so by setting up the Parish Pro-Life Network they can wash their hands of the matter.

As Pontius Pilate found out, you cannot wash your hands of innocent blood.

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter was sent by Bob Dorscheid, on behalf of 16 members of the Parish Pro-Life Network.

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