

# All ages share in Masses at Webster nursing home

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

WEBSTER — An award-winning Mass? Sounds funny, but that would be an accurate description of the services conducted at Maplewood Nursing Home.

Mass at Maplewood, 100 Daniel Drive, is an experience shared by people of many types — young and old, Catholic and non-Catholic.

Every first and third Tuesday of the month, about 25 of Maplewood's 70 residents attend Mass in the nursing home's dining room. It's celebrated by Father William Endres, parochial vicar at Holy Trinity Church.

Assisting at each Mass is a group of students from Holy Trinity School, who visit with the residents and help turn the pages of the prayer and song books.

These Masses have been an institution since 1976, the first year Maplewood was open, thanks largely in part to the efforts of Webster's Evelyn and Leo Schwenzer.

Evelyn serves as coordinator for the services, and her husband, Leo, is one of six additional adult volunteers. The Schwenzers are proud to point out that their organization was recently named Group Volunteer of the Year in District 9 (western New York) by the New York State Health Facilities.

"There are patients who don't have visitors, or maybe have relatives who come see them once a month; and that's sad," remarked Leo Schwenzer. "So they look forward to us coming. You really build up quite a friendship with them."

The Schwenzers estimate that as many as 10 residents who attend the Masses are non-Catholics. "They like to listen to the sermons and socialize," Leo noted.

Up until three years ago, the Mass was celebrated by the late Father Paul Cuddy, who was in residence at Holy Trinity until moving back to his native Auburn in 1988. The late Father John O'Malley, then a chaplain at Bishop Kearney High School, continued the tradition; Father Endres replaced Father O'Malley after his death about a year ago.

Holy Trinity children were added to the list of volunteers about 10 years ago. The students — from grades four through six — visit the nursing home in groups of 12 to 15.

"You have to prepare the fourth-graders for what they will see ... A good many of them haven't ever had a relative who's had a stroke or was se-



Evelyn Schwenzer (above) helped organize the semi-monthly Masses in 1976. At left, Holy Trinity student Courtney Englert holds a song book for Rose Austin (left).

Courier Photos by  
Babette G. Augustin



Maplewood Nursing Home resident Elizabeth Stenner (left) and Becky Sutherland listen to the homily.

nile," pointed out Holy Trinity piano teacher Rita Borton, who accompanies the students to the Masses.

Overall, the addition of children has been a nice touch.

"They're very involved, and they're very respectful," Borton observed.

"I like to see their holy little faces," remarked Florence Hyland, a Holy Trinity parishioner who has lived at Maplewood for about a month.



Holy Trinity piano teacher Rita Borton accompanies the March 17 Mass at Maplewood Nursing Home.

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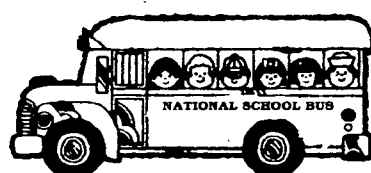
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