



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Catholic Family Center, currently located at 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, is scheduled to relocate to the Sibley Tower Building by July 1.

CFC to move into Sibley building by July 1

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Currently located on several floors at 50 Chestnut St., the Catholic Family Center is relocating to the Sibley Tower Building. The move, scheduled to take place by July 1, will consolidate all CFC offices on the seventh floor of the Sibley building, on the corner of East Main and Franklin streets.

CFC officials said their new location will feature more space for department and counseling conferences, better utilization of office machines, and overall greater accessibility to the thousands of clients the agency serves yearly.

By moving from its current offices, the CFC is ending the diocese's long-time affiliation with 50 Chestnut St., formerly known as the Columbus Civic Center.

The building, which opened in 1928 under the auspices of the Knights of Columbus, at one time was home to the diocesan chancery and schools office, the Society for the Propagation of

the Faith, and one of CFC's predecessor agencies, Catholic Charities. The building also housed the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's apartment in the 1960s.

The move from 50 Chestnut St. coincides with CFC's 75th anniversary, which the agency will mark with a kickoff celebration 4 p.m. Thursday, May 7, in the atrium of the Sibley building, according to Robert Mahar, coordinator of CFC's public relations and director of the agency's Catholic Youth Organization department. At the celebration, CFC will announce other events during the year that will highlight the anniversary.

CFC will move its offices sometime soon over a still-to-be designated weekend, commented Mahar, who noted that the move should entail little or no interruption of services to the community.

CFC has signed a seven-year lease with Wilmorite, Inc., owner of the Sibley Tower. Most of the renovation work needed to accommodate CFC's offices, including ceiling installation and wall painting, already has been completed, Mahar said.

Carolyn Portanova, CFC's executive director, estimated that the move

would cost \$10,000 to \$15,000, exclusive of a telephone system that will link all of the agency's offices. She noted that the three independent phone systems now in use at CFC's Chestnut Street often create communications headaches, so shopping for a unified phone system has been a priority in the move.

Portanova said she could not estimate the current square footage CFC occupies at Chestnut Street, but that the 38,000 square feet on the Sibley building's seventh floor probably exceeds the agency's current space.

Funding for the move will not come out of the center's \$8 million operating budget, but from private donors and at least two foundations. Thus far, Portanova said, the Davenport-Hatch and Daisy Marquis Jones foundations have committed funds for the project.

The floor plan for the offices of CFC's nine departments has not been determined yet, Mahar stressed. But he noted that each department will be situated in separate adjoining portions on the seventh floor.

The move has been in the works for about two years, according to Mahar, who noted that consolidating the agency's nine departments on one

floor represents the culmination of a merger process that began in 1988. In November of that year, the old Catholic Family Center merged with the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry and the Catholic Youth Organization.

Consolidating CFC's offices on one floor will create a smoother working environment, Mahar said. Both he and Portanova noted that many staffers waste time going from floor to floor at the Chestnut Street building in order to relay interoffice communications and coordinate other agency efforts.

"It's going to allow us to do more interdepartmental things," Mahar said.

The CYO director also pointed out that the Sibley Tower location will allow CFC to more efficiently deliver its services to the public, especially walk-in clientele, who will no longer need to scurry from floor to floor looking for the agency's offices.

He added that a city bus station stands right outside the Sibley building, and that the building itself is well-known to area residents.

EDITORS' NOTE: CFC is seeking donations of office furniture. For information, call 716/546-7220.

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