

# Sheen Foundation faces flood of housing woes

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

**PHELPS** — The Horton home on the edge of Phelps has running water.

Unfortunately, the water is not running through the house's pipes. Those have been empty since the pump for the well broke 12 years ago.

The water in the Horton's house enters through gaping holes in the roof. It trickles down through walls and ceilings into pans scattered about the kitchen. When one of those pans overflowed earlier this year, the water poured into and ruined the refrigerator's motor.

Meanwhile, because they have no well pump, house residents have to walk — they don't own a car — as much as five miles to neighbors' homes to fill jugs with drinking water.

Just to get the well, roof and crumbling front steps repaired would cost approximately \$5,000, according to Gleece Horton.

But Gleece and her sister, Joy, earn very little money through their jobs in a sheltered workshop operated by the Ontario County Association for Retarded Citizens.

Their widowed mother, Emily, receives Supplemental Security Income and disability payments. Two men from the workshop, Brian Gunsalus and William Davis, also live at the house, but they are unable to help pay for the repairs.

"We tried to save money, and the bills took it," Gleece noted.

In the spring of 1992, Gleece began contacting area agencies for help. By summer, she had been directed to the



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor  
(From left) Brian Gunsalus, Gleece, Joy and Emily Horton and William Davis are looking to the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation for help with repairs on their Phelps home. Those interested in making a contribution to the agency can write 935 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14607. Donations can be designated for specific cases, such as the Hortons.

Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, Inc.

Established in 1968 by then-Bishop of Rochester, Fulton J. Sheen, the foundation was created to help deal with the lack of affordable, decent housing in the Rochester diocese. Since 1980, the agency has been jointly sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, and serves a 13-county region.

The two dioceses provide funding support for the agency. As part of its funding for the agency, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester pro-

vided more than \$15,000 for the foundation's staffing costs through last year's Thanks Giving Appeal, the diocese's chief source of income.

After they were contacted by the Hortons, foundation officials agreed to help pay for repairs. Unfortunately, agency officials — and the Hortons — have been waiting for the money to do the work.

And the Hortons are not alone in their plight either, according to Allyn Smith, the agency's executive director. "We have 96 families just waiting,"

Smith said.

The problem, Smith explained, is that the Sheen Foundation relies on state and federal funding to help pay for repairs. This year, she said, the state government did not allocate enough money for upstate New York. In addition, the money that has been allocated has not yet been made available, she said.

These delays sometimes mean leaky roofs lead to damaged walls and floors, Smith observed. "You have people who might become homeless in the end," she said.

And even after government funds are available, they must be matched by donations at rates of 40 to 50 percent, depending on the program. Thus, Sheen officials have to patch together funding from a number of sources in order to secure governmental monies, Smith said.

Yet those efforts have paid off, Smith noted.

In fiscal year 1991-92, the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation helped 148 families repair their homes, and assisted another 61 families in buying homes, Smith reported.

One of the chief sources of funds to match government monies, Smith noted, is private donations.

This year, the agency will need even more donations, Smith predicted.

"The weather has been a major problem this year with all the rain," Smith noted. "We get three to four calls a week from new families."

As for the Hortons, Smith said, "We can't help them now. We will help them, but the money is just not there."

## Board's mailing reveals other scenarios for quadrant

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

**ROCHESTER** — The Southwest Quadrant Governance Board considered at least three other scenarios before proposing its current reorganization plan, according to an informational sheet the board mailed out to quadrant school parents last week.

According to the letter, K-6 programs at Holy Family and St. Theodore schools would have been closed under some other scenarios.

The sheet was released in response to questions parents asked at two public meetings, held in October, after the board's proposal to close two quadrant schools was announced.

The board's current proposal calls for the closing of Most Precious Blood School in the city, and Holy Ghost School in Gates. K-6 programs would be housed at Holy Family, St. Pius the Tenth, St. Helen's in Gates and St. Theodore's, Spencerport.

All Saints, the quadrant junior high located in the St. Theodore's building, would continue to operate there.

Three other scenarios the board considered would have painted a picture somewhat different than the one currently proposed for the quadrant.

The first plan would have closed the K-6 programs at St. Theodore's and Most Precious Blood, housed a K-4 program at Holy Ghost and K-6 programs at the remaining schools. All Saints would then have occupied all of St. Theodore's school building.

The second plan would have closed K-6 programs at Holy Family, along with those at Most Precious Blood and Holy Ghost. St. Theodore's, St. Helen's and St. Pius would have housed K-6 programs, and All Saints would have

moved to the Holy Family building.

The third plan would have closed St. Theodore's and Holy Ghost, and housed K-6 programs at Most Precious Blood, Holy Family, St. Helen and St. Pius. As was the case in the first plan, All Saints would have taken over all of St. Theodore's building.

Casey Swanson, chairman of the governance board, stated that her group chose its final proposal because it would enable the quadrant to move large groups of children from closed schools with less disruption than that brought on by other proposals.

Swanson explained that the board looked at the empty-desk space available in each quadrant school. For example, all of Most Precious Blood's current 97-member student body could relocate to Holy Family's building, and the 104 students attending Holy Ghost could move into St. Helen's under the current proposal, she said.

But in a worst-case scenario, as much as half of the children enrolled at Most Precious Blood and Holy Ghost may leave the quadrant if the proposal is enacted, according to the informational sheet. The board hopes, however, "that parents will ... seek out other quadrant schools."

The board also considered placing a junior high at Holy Ghost "but ... it was deemed too expensive."

The informational sheet did not satisfy the curiosity of Pam Buehler, convener of Holy Ghost's Home-School Association.

"I was not impressed," she said. "It didn't answer any specific questions that we asked."

In particular, Buehler wanted to know more about how and if All Saints will be able to accommodate all of the quadrant's current sixth- and

seventh-graders next year. All Saints School has an enrollment cap of 200, but 142 sixth-graders are currently enrolled in the quadrant along with an additional 105 seventh-graders.

The informational sheet states: "The board recognizes the need to accommodate every Catholic student desiring a place in a ... school regardless of the configuration next year."

In an interview with the *Catholic*

*Courier*, Swanson noted that the board will stand behind its statements in the informational sheet — even if that means restructuring All Saints to include additional classrooms.

She also noted that concern about the quadrant turning away students next year may be overstated because, in reality, 10 to 20 percent of quadrant students leave permanently whenever reorganization takes place.

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