



# CATHOLIC COURIER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY

Vol. 104 No. 10

Thursday, December 3, 1992

75¢

20 pages

## Welcomed relief

Representatives of U.S.-based relief organizations, including Catholic Relief Services, welcomed use of military force to help in delivery of humanitarian supplies to starving Somalis. See page 4.



Residents of the Holt Road Catholic Charities group home in Webster gather in the living room of their six-bedroom house, one of nine group homes a variety of agencies operate in Webster.

They are (front row, left to right): Paul Powell, Carolyn Legasse and Kathleen Brennenman; second row: Thomas Baumbarger, Gregory Herman, Denielle Schreibe, Janet Sluja and Catherine Hughes.

## 'NIMBY syndrome' hounds agencies

ROCHESTER — When DePaul Mental Health Services attempted to open an adolescent group home in Williamson in 1990, some town residents raised protest signs on their front lawns.

And when the former Newark Developmental Center held meetings with officials in one Seneca County town about a proposed group home in the early 1980s, the mayor declared that the home would never open.

Today, the DePaul home experiences a great deal of community support in Williamson, according to Jeff McConnell, director of DePaul's Adolescent, Young Adult and Hearing Impaired Homes, which operates six group homes in Monroe and Wayne counties.

And the Seneca County mayor who was initially opposed to the group home in his town is now so supportive of the program, "He's almost become an ambassador," noted

### Officials say fear is problem's root

Joe Zeoli, program development specialist for Newark Developmental Disabilities Service Office, which operates 61 group homes in Wayne, Ontario, Yates and Seneca counties.

Still, both McConnell and Zeoli acknowledged that they will face the "NIMBY syndrome" again.

The NIMBY syndrome — the term "NIMBY" is an acronym for "Not In My Back Yard" — stems from when groups and individuals opposing a project in their neighborhood or community suggest that it be placed elsewhere.

NIMBY doesn't only surface when there's opposition to a group home, either.

For example, neighbors and town officials protested when the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry attempted to develop low-income housing in Geneva in 1988.

And when Corpus Christi Parish attempted to purchase a building to house its supper program and homeless shelter, Dimitri House, in 1985, some neighbors — including State Assemblyman David F. Gantt of Rochester (D.-133rd District) — protested vehemently. The parish changed its plans and opened the ministry at another site in 1986.

Still, the NIMBY syndrome's primary target is group homes run by state, church and private social service agencies, noted Ron Byrne, a spokesman for the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

"I honestly believe that 'NIMBYism' is a symptom of a need for better public edu-

Continued on page 17

Story by Lee Strong