

Catholic Family Center favors gun-control law

Director applauds City Council vote

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Catholic Family Center was among several organizations supporting a gun-control ordinance passed by an 8-to-1 vote by the Rochester City Council on Tuesday evening, March 16.

The ordinance, signed on March 18 by Mayor Thomas P. Ryan Jr., is scheduled to go into effect two weeks after its adoption.

Among other measures, the ordinance bans the possession of long guns able to carry more than six cartridges and of handguns that can carry more than 17 cartridges.

Additionally, the ordinance bans possession of loaded and unloaded firearms in public places and facilities; mandates certain requirements for weapons storage; and bans possession of firearms by people under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Prior to the City Council's vote at the March 16 meeting, Brian Kane, director of CFC's Office of Social Policy and Research, stated CFC's position:

"There is no question in our minds that this legislation is necessary and will send an important signal of City Council's willingness to do whatever it can to reduce the level of violence in our community," Kane said.

The agency's director noted that the center had collected 160 signatures on petitions calling for the ordinance's passage. Kane added that the signatures were collected despite the blizzard that paralyzed Rochester the weekend of March 13-14.

"I believe we would have had at least 1,000 had the snowstorm not interrupted Sunday services," he told the *Catholic Courier*.

Kane added that the signatures were primarily collected by such agencies as CFC and the House of Mercy, an outreach center operated by the Sisters of Mercy, and by parishes such as St. Augustine, Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Monica and Blessed Sacrament.

He also noted at the City Council meeting that CFC believes its own offices will benefit from the ordinance's passage.

"CFC's interest in this issue stems from our deep concern about the safety and well-being of our staff and clients," Kane commented. "There have been gun-related incidents (around) Francis Center on Joseph Avenue, and our outreach office at 218 Clifford Avenue."

Francis Center is a year-round housing facility for homeless men. The outreach center on Clifford Avenue houses such programs as La Lucha, a center for substance-abuse services. Kane explained to the *Courier* that neither center was directly attacked by a gunman, but that gun-related activity had occurred near both venues.

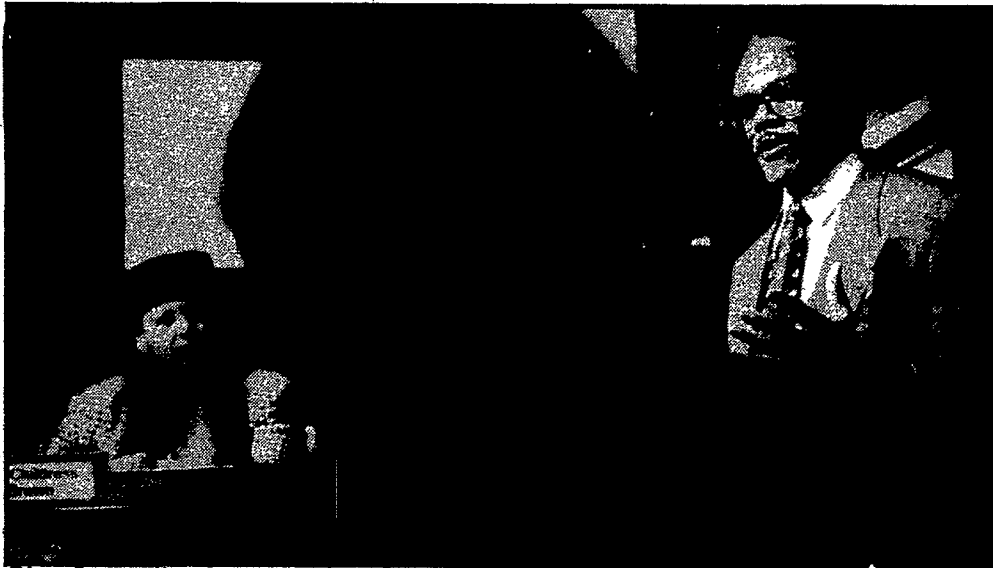
Kane acknowledged that at least two

People are just fed up and tired of the violence.

Brian Kane, director of CFC's Office of Social Policy and Research



Opponents of a gun-control ordinance make their feelings known during a March 16 public forum prior to the Rochester City Council's 8-1 vote in favor of the ban.



City Councilwoman Maxine Childress Brown (left) listens to Theodore Harley, a representative from the Northside Church of Christ, speak in support of gun control.

people, including a CFC volunteer, had complained to him about the agency taking a public stance in favor of the gun-control measure. The agency felt that it had to publicly support the bill because it believes violence "is too big an issue" to ignore, Kane told the volunteer.

He added that the volunteer wanted to leave the agency because of its support for the bill.

"I said, 'You're not here volunteering because of the agency's stance,' Kane recalled. 'You're here because you support the clients.'"

The vast majority of people he has spoken to about the agency's stance

supported the gun-control measure, Kane claimed.

"People are just fed up and tired of the violence," he commented.

In addition to supporting the gun-control bill, CFC's petition noted that the problem of violence could not be solved unless the unemployment of inner-city youths was addressed, along with problems of community policing.

The petition also called on the city to acknowledge "the significant disparities in family income, education, housing and the justice system encountered by African-Americans, Hispanics and poor white citizens in the metropolitan area."

Home for terminally ill set to open

CLIFTON SPRINGS — Nearly 325 people took part in a March 7 open house and dedication ceremony for the House of John — a home for the terminally ill — located at 14 Spring St. The building is owned by St. Felix Parish, 12 Hibbard Ave.

The ecumenical project is expected to begin caring for its first guests in May, according to Bob Bendix Sr., publicity chairman.

The number of people who attended the open house illustrates the support the program has received since its inception in the fall of 1992, Bendix told the *Catholic Courier*.

"It's just amazing how people have responded," Bendix said.

After the building was made available, its interior was extensively renovated to accommodate up to two terminally ill guests at one time, Bendix said. The labor, wallpaper, carpeting,

furnishings and other supplies were all donated by area residents.

In addition, approximately 75 people have been trained to serve as volunteers for the house — some in direct care roles, others in support and maintenance. Bendix noted that the program will need a volunteer pool of about 125 people when the house officially opens.

The House of John is intended to serve patients in Wayne, Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties. It will provide free-of-charge an "alternative living arrangement" for individuals who are expected to die within three months and who lack financial or family support to receive care elsewhere.

The facility will not be a licensed hospice. The guests' regular physicians will provide the necessary medical care.

— Lee Strong

Len Bias' mother to speak at Mercy and McQuaid

BRIGHTON — Dr. Lonise Bias, whose son, Len, had his life cut short by a fatal cocaine overdose in 1986, is scheduled to appear at Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road. Her lecture will take place in the Mercy auditorium on Monday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Len Bias had just been selected as the Boston Celtics No. 1 draft choice when he died of an overdose in June of 1986. His brother, Jay, also had his life end tragically when he was shot to death in a shopping mall.

Since these tragedies, Lonise Bias has dedicated herself to giving nationwide lectures on the dangers of substance abuse and violence in our society.

Prior to her evening appearance at Mercy, Bias will speak to Mercy and McQuaid Jesuit High School students during the school day.

Tickets are \$2 and can be purchased either at the door or by calling 716/288-7120 or 473-1130.

Irish tenor will perform at Elmira Notre Dame

ELMIRA — Frank Patterson, an internationally known Irish tenor and recording artist, will present an evening of Irish ballads as well as selections from Broadway musicals in a concert at Notre Dame High School, 1400 Maple Ave., on Friday, March 26. The show will begin at 8 p.m.

Patterson will be joined by his wife, Elly O'Grady, a pianist and Irish-harpist; and son, Banan, a violinist.

Patterson had a feature role as a singer and actor in the Irish hit movie, *The Dead*. He has completed four tours of the United States and has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and Radio City Music Hall.

Tickets for the March 26 concert are \$15 for general admission and \$25 for reserved seating, which includes an invitation to a reception following the performance. Tickets may be ordered by calling Notre Dame High School at 607/734-2267 or The Ancient Order of the Hibernians of Chemung County at 733-0063.