

Pro-life group again targets United Way drive

Fears funds will support abortion

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — A pro-life coalition is once again calling on people to divert donations from the United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc.

The group is urging the protest in light of the United Way's support for Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley, which plans to open an abortion clinic in Rochester later this year.

Members of the coalition — known as Citizens for United Way Responsibility — are urging donors to give directly to the charities and organizations of their choice, rather than contribute to the United Way's current drive.

The goal of this year's United Way drive, which began April 1 and is scheduled to conclude May 20, is \$35.5 million.

Last year, the agency raised \$35.4 million — more than \$3 million short of its \$38.5 million goal. That shortfall was attributed to the sluggish economy, scandals involving the national United Way organization, and efforts by the coalition and other abortion clinic opponents.

The coalition announced its plans regarding this year's drive during a March 31 press conference outside United Way's headquarters at 55 St. Paul St.

"Our purpose is not to hurt United Way — because they do serve the community," explained Dorothy Hayes, a coalition member. "One of our purposes (for the press conference) was to restate who we are. We wanted to say that we cannot give to the United Way because of its support for Planned Parenthood."

During the press conference, coalition members detailed a campaign involving leaflets, radio advertisements and an April 3 informational session at GeVa Theater, 75 Woodbury Blvd.

The April 3 gathering featured talks by Kermit Eady, executive director of the Black United Fund of New York, who spoke about the issue's economic



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Dorothy Hayes (center), coordinator of Citizens for United Way Responsibility, answers questions during a March 31 press conference outside United Way's headquarters at 55 St. Paul St., Rochester.

dimension; and Father Paul Mankowski, a graduate student at Harvard University, who spoke about the moral issues involved with contributing to the United Way.

Coalition members do not want to hurt organizations that rely on support from the United Way drive, said Hayes, a parishioner at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 4536 St. Paul Blvd.

Last year, many organizations — including a number of Catholic agencies — suffered due to United Way's shortfall, Hayes said. Therefore, the coalition is urging people to give directly to charities that could be hurt if the United Way once again falls short of its goal.

Ironically, Planned Parenthood, the target of last year's protest, actually received more in designated donations than it would have through the general fund.

The coalition is asking that Planned Parenthood be removed from the general fund and made a donor-designation agency. Such a designation would mean that Planned Parenthood

would only receive funds donors specifically earmark for the organization. Thus individuals opposed to abortion do not have to worry that their United Way donations will support abortion — directly or indirectly, Hayes said.

"I think what we want to make clear is that what we are asking is not unreasonable," Hayes said. "Moving (Planned Parenthood) to donor-designation will not hurt them financially. They do not need the United Way to raise funds for them, whereas these other organizations that are getting hurt do."

But Neil Haddad, director of communications and special events for the United Way, told the *Catholic Courier* that the decision was made to keep Planned Parenthood a general fund agency because the organization's relationship with the United Way dates back to 1968.

Haddad said an agreement worked out between the United Way and Planned Parenthood guarantees that agency funds will be used only for education and counseling services — not

for abortions.

Hayes charged, however, that those counseling services help lead to abortions, and thus United Way money indirectly supports abortion. That link will become more pronounced if Planned Parenthood opens the proposed abortion clinic at its University Avenue headquarters, she added.

Further, Hayes noted that even if donated monies are not used directly to fund abortions or even abortion counseling, those monies can be used for other programs and services at Planned Parenthood. Thus the clinic might benefit indirectly either from those other services, or from money freed from supporting those services.

Beyond the moral debates, any impact the coalition's efforts might have could potentially affect many organizations receiving United Way funds.

Catholic Family Center, for example, has requested \$1.3 million in United Way monies to help fund services for the aging, teen pregnancy, maternity, early childhood programs, family counseling services and foster care programs.

Several Catholic organizations are participating in the United Way campaign. The Pastoral Center has a goal of \$10,900 dollars, according to coordinators there. Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a March 25 letter encouraging Pastoral Center employees to give to the campaign.

Hayes noted that some people question the diocese's continuing support for the United Way. To further complicate the issue, a number of people — including letter writers to the *Catholic Courier* — have called on Bishop Clark, a member of United Way's board of directors, to resign from the board.

But Jack Balinsky, director of diocesan Social Ministry, believes that the debate is not that clear cut.

"We feel that our involvement has much greater impact for good than for evil," Balinsky said. Thus diocesan involvement with United Way is intended to help steer the agency toward pro-life activities.

"We would strongly urge Catholics to participate in the United Way," Balinsky said, "but I recognize people in good faith and in good conscience could have opposing views."

Task force sees 'substantial' progress to fight racism

By Lee Strong
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ROCHESTER — Members of the diocesan Task Force on Societal Injustice met with Bishop Matthew H. Clark in early March to evaluate progress on racial issues in the diocese over the past six months.

The March 3 meeting at the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, focused on actions now underway or being planned in response to the task force's recommendations in a report released Oct. 15, 1992. Those recommendations encompassed such areas as employment and business practices; education and awareness; and community building efforts.

The diocese has made considerable progress in a number of areas, noted Kathleen Cannon, co-chair of the task force's implementation team. Cannon, who serves as diocesan director of Urban Services, prepared a summary of activities for the March 3 meeting.

"When I gathered all of the information together and began to write the (progress report), I was pleased to see there has been substantial amounts of

progress made," Cannon told the *Catholic Courier*.

Cannon noted that among those areas where action has been taken were a series of three training sessions for Pastoral Center employees, held Nov. 17, Dec. 16, and Jan. 6; the hiring of three minority employees at the Pastoral Center; efforts to locate qualified minority candidates for diocesan boards; and the creation of a Diversity Recruitment Team to help surface qualified minority pastoral ministers.

Further, Pastoral Center officials are developing a policy to purchase goods from minority- and women-owned businesses. That policy will go into effect during the 1993-94 fiscal year, Cannon noted. In addition to ecumenical prayer services, the Pastoral Center has been hosting liturgical celebrations that include multicultural elements.

Meanwhile, the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis is developing workshops dealing with prejudice. The Department of Urban Services will sponsor a prejudice reduction workshop for urban parish staffs May 4 and 6, at Blessed Sacrament Church, 534 Oxford St. Joyce

Herman, director of the Upstate National Coalition Building Institute, is scheduled to lead the workshop.

The Department of Evangelization and Catechesis is also working with the Catholic Schools Office to revise the diocesan religious curriculum so that it covers more social justice issues. The office also helped religious educators in Cayuga County organize a two-day workshop on multicultural awareness March 25 and 27.

In addition, the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry held a cultural awareness training session for parish staff; the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry helped develop responses to attempts by a neo-Nazi group to establish a commune in Auburn; and the Office of Liturgy provided parishes with homily suggestions about diocesan Synod theme six, which focuses on social justice issues and calls for combating racism and sexism.

To help keep people informed about these and other efforts, Cannon said her department, Parish Support Ministries, has been publishing *Building Community* every two months. The newsletter shares resources, informs

parishes of what other churches are doing, and seeks to raise awareness about social issues, she explained.

"I see all the initiatives hopefully raising our awareness and calling people to constant internal inspection to see where we are on the journey," Cannon said.

Cannon said many initial steps have been taken at the institutional level at the Pastoral Center and at the regional social ministry offices.

"I see the next thrust of the societal injustice document and recommendations being much more parish-centered," she said.

Current and future initiatives, Cannon predicted, will also be undertaken in conjunction with the diocesan General Synod, scheduled for October 1-3 at the Rochester Convention Center, 123 E. Main St.

"I hope that we can look at recommendations in the (racism task force) document in harmony with the recommendations of the Synod — especially theme 6 — and use them as an opportunity to help our church grow," Cannon said.