

Network to campaign for more drug treatment

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Catholic social activists plan to call on the City of Rochester and Monroe County to provide more money for drug and alcohol treatment services, according to Brian Kane, director of social policy and research for Catholic Family Center.

Kane was among a number of Catholic social activists who spoke to representatives of more than 20 parishes belonging to the Social Action Network at St. Salome's Parish, 4282 Culver Road, on Saturday, Oct. 23. Other speakers included the leaders of the House of Mercy, an outreach center operated by the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester.

The representatives listened to a number of speeches before discussing

proposals to curb violence and drug abuse. In a plenary session, the representatives approved a plan to organize 400 people for a January meeting with Monroe County Executive Robert King and Rochester's newly elected mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

The proposal calling for increases in drug treatment funding also demanded that those "services should be comprehensive and fully accessible to the poor, working poor and uninsured."

The proposal included an "action campaign" plan that called for the use of petitions and parish meetings to further the campaign for increased drug treatment services.

Sixteen people also volunteered to form a study group to look at the issue of television violence, Kane said.

The Social Action Network was or-

ganized last spring to help parishes form responses to various pressures on the family, according to Jim Witulski, the meeting's keynote speaker and a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Parish, 2400 Ridge Road W., Greece.

More than 900 people spoke to representatives of SAN and the House of Mercy from July to September. A number of proposals, including the two eventually approved at the plenary session, were drawn up by the leadership teams of SAN and the House of Mercy for presentation at the meeting.

Although many people told network members that they were concerned with economic, health and education issues, violence and drug abuse topped the list of concerns for people inside and outside of the city, Witulski said.

He noted that many area residents, particularly in the city, said they fear walking the streets at night, and that drug traffickers and criminals have literally forced some people to flee their neighborhood. He claimed that at least half the criminals in the state are under the influence of drugs and alcohol when they commit their crimes.

At the same time, the judicial system keeps using incarceration as the primary approach to stopping violence and drug abuse — an approach that fills jails with inner-city minority offenders while letting white drug abusers escape the law, he argued. He added that whites tend to receive drug-abuse treatment rather than imprisonment for their addiction.

Kane said that the network will meet again in the future, but that no date or location for the next meeting is set.

Diocese slates town meetings on national health plan

Diocesan Catholics will have the opportunity to speak their minds on national health care reform at a series of town meetings in November.

The meetings are co-sponsored by the diocesan Public Policy Committee and the regional social ministry offices: Catholic Family Center, Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry and the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry.

The meetings are designed to help the diocese form a cohesive response to the federal health care plan, according to Judy Taylor, communications manager for diocesan Social Ministry. She noted that the public policy committee — formed a year ago — was established to communicate diocesan views on legislative issues with such lobbying bodies as the Albany, N.Y.-based New York State Catholic Conference, and the United States Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C.

The health care reform meetings, and the regions in which they are slated, are as follows:

• **Rochester:** Wednesday, Nov. 3, in the rectory hall of Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. This meeting is also sponsored by the diocesan Department of Urban Services.

Dr. Howard Freed, head of emer-

gency services at Albany Medical Center and a member of President Clinton's health care reform task force, will join a panel discussion at the meeting.

The panel will also include Marshall Spurlock, president and chief executive officer of Rochester's Anthony Jordan Health Center; Bruce Popper, president of the health workers Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union; and Jack Balinsky, diocesan director of social ministry.

Father John M. Mulligan, diocesan

vicar general, will also attend the meeting.

In addition to the panel discussion, the answer session will include a question-and-answer session with the audience, and time for small groups to meet and discuss such issues as managed care vs. single payer systems; Rochester's health care system vs. the proposed national system; mental health; and the elderly.

For information, call Brian Kane at 716/262-7021. A diocesan statement on issues is available by calling 262-7020.

Finger Lakes

• **Auburn:** Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Alphonsus Church, 95 E. Genesee St.

• **Canandaigua:** Wednesday, Nov. 10, 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, 95 N. Main St.

• **Newark:** Tuesday, Nov. 16, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Michael's Church, 401 S. Main St.

For information, call Kevin Hennessy at 315/789-5785.

Southern Tier

• **Hornell:** Tuesday, Nov. 16, 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Ann's School Hall, 31 Erie Ave.

• **Corning:** Saturday, Nov. 30, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at The Corning Senior Center, 1 Park Lane.

In addition, another meeting is slated for Monday, Nov. 29, in the Cohocton/Wayland area. The site was not yet confirmed as of press time.

A meeting has also been planned for Tioga County, but no date or site has been determined.

For information, call Kathy Dubel at 607/734-6588.

— Rob Cullivan

Leadership Day set for Oct. 30

YATES COUNTY — Diocesan Parish Support Ministries has scheduled Leadership Day '93 for Keuka College on Saturday, Oct. 30. The daylong event is scheduled to run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Titled "Fanning Into Flame Our God-given Gifts," Leadership Day '93 will feature a variety of workshops. While one of the programs will deal with how parishes can implement priorities set forth at the recently completed General

Synod, another will focus on the specific priority of small Christian communities.

The event will also include workshops on parish councils, bereavement ministry, the annulment process, social ministry and clustering.

The cost for Leadership Day is \$10 per person. Participants should bring their own lunches; hot beverages will be provided.

For information, contact Deacon Claude Lester at 716/328-3228.

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