

House of Mercy project lobbying for traffic safety

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Members of the House of Mercy Organizing Project and concerned school parents plan to meet with the City School District Safety Committee later this month to discuss the group's proposal to install speed-limit signs and flashing lights around Nathaniel Hawthorne School No. 25.

The meeting at 7 p.m. Jan. 26 will take place at the school, located on the corner of Bay and North Goodman streets.

The city has installed pentagonal signs showing an adult and child figure crossing the street on both Bay and Goodman, but no other special traffic lights or signs indicate the presence of a school in the area — a bone of contention between area residents and the City of Rochester.

The organizing project operates out of the House of Mercy, an outreach center of the Sisters of Mercy located at 102 Central Park. Project organizers conducted a series of one-on-one conversations with 566 area residents last year and found that safety for school children was the residents' top concern.

Norma Bushorr, the school's principal, explained that parental concern about traffic safety has been heightened by accidents involving two children over the last two years. One of those accidents involved Rodney Hawkins, a kindergarten student who suffered a concussion when he was struck by a truck on Nov. 8.

Since November, parents and members of the organizing project have met with the School District Safety Committee on three occasions and asked for the installation of speed limit signs and flashing lights. So far, the committee has only agreed to install the pedestrian signs, according to Greg Mercer, a leader of the organizing project.

Mercer, whose son attends second grade at School No. 25, pointed out that he is frustrated with the lack of response from the City School District Safety Committee to the residents' desire for flashing lights and speed limit signs. In particular, he criticized Terrence J. Rice, the committee's chairman, for not readily agreeing that flashing lights and speed limit signs should be installed around the school.

"We were quite confident that he was going to comply with us," Mercer said. "But the problem is still not solved."

An associate engineer with the Monroe County Department of Transporta-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

A crossing guard shuttles Nathaniel Hawthorne School students across Bay Street.

tion, Rice noted that studies have shown speed limit signs, school signs and flashing lights do not necessarily cause dri-

vers to slow down. In particular, he pointed out that flashing lights left on all day are ineffective because motorists eventually ignore their presence.

However, other studies have shown that flashing lights that are on only during arrival and dismissal times at schools have compelled motorists to slow down, he said. He added that the city may look at adding such flashing lights to the signs in the area.

Bushorr noted that she would like to see a crosswalk with flashing lights created in front of the school's North Goodman entrance. Morning kindergarten students, in particular, are in danger because they often walk home alone and can dart across the street unaccompanied by adults, she said.

"I very definitely think that one of the problems is there are not definite markers to show drivers where the school is," she added.

Student crossing guards are posted around the school area in the morning and during afternoon dismissal, she said, but the school can not provide them at midday for the kindergarteners.

"That cuts into the instructional day," she said.

Nonetheless, Bushorr said she was optimistic that the city would eventually comply with the residents' requests for traffic safety improvements.

Although he opposed establishing a crosswalk in front of the school on North Goodman, Rice said that city police might eventually provide a crossing guard to monitor midday dismissal.

Pro-lifers plan activities for Roe vs. Wade anniversary

Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Pro-life activists from across the diocese and around the country are gearing up for activities to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Jan. 22, 1971, Roe vs. Wade decision, which removed most state restrictions on abortion.

Among the Rochester-area activities is Sanctity of Human Life Week leading up to the annual March for Life in Washington on Friday, Jan. 21.

The week will include a worship service and an address by Buffalo-area pro-life activist Rev. Paul Schenk at 7 p.m. Jan. 14. The talk will take place at the New Covenant Fellowship, 2070 Five Mile Line Road, Penfield.

The week's organizers have also scheduled a service at the Civic Center Plaza in downtown Rochester Jan. 15. That service will include a "Stand for Life" in which approximately 300 people will stand in 20 lines to form a human bar-

graph representing the number of abortions performed in the United States over the last 20 years.

Charles Falco, a member of the New Covenant Fellowship, noted that the idea for the Jan. 14 event — and the Civic Center service in particular — is to focus attention on the upcoming March for Life and on the Clinton administration's policies related to abortion.

"We wanted to get people focused on what is going on," Falco said. "I don't think most people understand that 30 million lives have been taken. It's mind-boggling."

In addition, buses will leave Jan. 20 for the March for Life from several locations around the diocese (see below for locations and information numbers).

The Rochester diocese will also take part in the second National Project Life postcard campaign, which will be conducted in parishes Jan. 22-23.

The campaign's theme will be "Keep Abortion Out of Health Care Reform."

The 1994 campaign was announced

Dec. 15 by its co-sponsors, the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, a Catholic pro-life group.

The health care plan proposed by President Clinton would include abortion coverage for all women. The U.S. bishops have backed many aspects of the Clinton plan but strongly oppose the inclusion of abortion coverage.

In its first year, the National Project Life Sunday postcard campaign generated from 3 million to 7 million postcards and letters to Congress against the Freedom of Choice Act. Congress failed to act on the legislation in 1993 and it is given little chance of passage in 1994.

The campaign involves distribution of sets of four postcards at Catholic parishes during the weekend of Jan. 22-23. Parishioners send postcards to each of their U.S. senators, their U.S. representative and to the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, to help keep track of participation in the campaign.

As part of the local postcard effort, Beth Luteran, assistant director for field coordination of the Human Life Amendment, presented a workshop on the campaign at the Pastoral Center Jan. 6.

In addition, Jack Balinsky, director of Diocesan Social Ministry, sent a letter dated Jan. 5 to all priests in the diocese urging support for the campaign.

The cards, which are to be available at Masses the weekend of the campaign, read: "Our nation needs to reform its health care system to protect the lives and enhance the dignity of all, especially the poor and vulnerable, the unserved and the unborn. Abortion is not health care; it destroys human life, and most Americans don't want to pay for it. Please don't force me to pay for abortions against my conscience. As your constituent, I urge you to keep abortion out of needed health care reform."

Buses to the March for Life this year will leave from three sites in Rochester: St. John of Rochester Church, 18 Wickford Way, Fairport; St. Jude the Apostle Church, 4100 Lyell Road; and St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 4536 St. Paul Blvd.

Another bus will begin at St. Anne's Church, 136 Church St. Palmyra, then travel to St. Michael's Church, 401 S. Main St., Newark and St. Mary's Church, 25 Center St., Waterloo, before going to Washington.

In the Southern Tier, the Chemung County Right to Life Committee is sponsoring a bus that will leave from the plaza on Grand Center Avenue in Horseheads. In addition, parishioners at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Apalachin have joined with Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Vestal to sponsor a bus.

For information about departure times and fees for the bus trips, call: 716/248-5993 (St. John's); 716/586-3956 (St. Jude's); 716/342-3216 (St. Thomas the Apostle); 315/539-8860 (St. Anne's-St. Michael's-St. Mary's); 607/732-6816 (Horseheads); or 607/625-3773 (St. Margaret Mary's).

Lay administrator to lead Hammondsport parish

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HAMMONDSPORT — Beginning this June, St. Gabriel's Church will become the first parish in diocesan history to have a full-time administrator other than a priest.

St. Gabriel's, located at 78 Sheather St., has been without a permanent pastor since Father Gerard J. McMahon relocated to the Diocese of Scranton, Pa., this past October.

According to Father Peter C. Clifford, diocesan director of Parish Support Ministries, a permanent pastoral administrator will assume many of Father McMahon's former duties. Father Clifford noted that the new administrator, who will be appointed by the diocese, will be a lay per-

son.

This plan was recently approved by parish planning committees at both St. Gabriel and St. Mary Church, 32 E. Morris St., Bath. Father Clifford originally met in November with these groups as well as committees from St. Januarius Church, 180 N. Main St., Naples, and St. Patrick Church, N. Main St., Prattsburg.

The meeting was precipitated by the sudden departure of pastors from two of these parishes in the fall of 1993. Along with Father McMahon's move to Pennsylvania, Father Eugene G. Eno, former pastor at St. Januarius, resigned in late September.

All of the parishes are located in Steuben County except for St. Januarius, which is located in Ontario County.

Clifford said he is "95 percent sure"

that St. Januarius in Naples and St. Patrick in Prattsburg will become a cluster by this June.

Currently, St. Patrick's is a mission parish of St. Gabriel in Hammondsport. A new pastor would be appointed in June to head the newly formed St. Januarius-St. Patrick cluster.

Meanwhile, the pastoral administrator at St. Gabriel in Hammondsport will work closely with Father Robert W. Hammond, pastor at St. Mary in Bath.

Father Hammond will assume the bulk of the sacramental duties at St. Gabriel since the pastoral administrator "would not be an ordained sacramental minister," Father Clifford explained.

"For all intensive purposes, the pastoral administrator will be our pastor

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