

Grant to develop 'green' project given to Southern Tier agency

ELMIRA — The U.S. Catholic Conference has awarded a \$1,500 grant to Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier to develop an environmental justice project.

The grant is part an attempt to bring environmental concerns to the front lines of the Catholic Church. The USCC has issued a 50-page resource kit to be mailed to each of the nation's 18,500 Catholic parishes beginning the week of Earth Day, April 24.

The booklet, called "Renewing the Face of the Earth: A Resource for Parishes," was prepared by the U.S. Catholic Conference's Environmental Justice Program as part of the ecumenical National Religious Partnership for the Environment.

Other partners in the national program — the National Council of Churches, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network — prepared similar booklets for their own congregations. In all, 53,000 churches and synagogues were to receive educational materials on the environment.

"The parish is where our faith life is lived out," said Walter Grazer, manager of the USCC program. "If the Catholic Church is going to make a difference in helping to bring about environmental justice, it will be through our parish communities."

The Catholic booklet, printed on recycled paper, offers suggested prayers, homily helps, essays for reflection and a four-step process for organizing an environmental justice committee in the parish.

It also contains the full text of "Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching," the 1991 document of the U.S. bishops from which the special three-year program on environmental justice arose in late 1993.

The booklet also contained an announcement of the

1995 environmental justice small grants program, which will begin accepting applications in September. Grants ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 will be awarded to new diocesan and parish initiatives that can serve as models for church-sponsored projects in other parts of the country.

One-year grants are to be offered in each of three years beginning in 1994. Twenty-two grants were awarded to U.S. parishes and dioceses in March.

Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier will use its grant to pilot a leadership training project for parishes. Training is slated to begin in September.

According to a diocesan press release, training will focus on raising awareness of parishioners and parish leadership regarding the deteriorating condition of the natural world and the call to be stewards of nature; the need to integrate environmental justice advocacy into parish life; and to promote sustainable development locally and globally.

Among other goals, the project will train a core group of environmental justice leaders at each diocesan parish, and explore how parishes can address unemployment and sustainable development through the creation of "green" enterprises.

According to a USCC press release, the Southern Tier project was chosen for funding because of its uniquely religious response to the environmental crisis and its link to Catholic social justice teachings.

In endorsing the pilot project, Bishop Matthew H. Clark noted, "The combined energies of our parishes, as well as our diocesan Catholic Charities agencies can make a significant contribution to achieving greater respect for the sanctity of God's creation."

This story contains reporting from Catholic News Service in Washington, D.C.



Provided photo

Father Rick Frechette with a Haitian child.

Haiti orphan priest set to visit Pittsford

PITTSFORD — Father Rick Frechette, a Catholic priest who works with Haitian orphans as well as sick and dying children in the troubled country, will be the guest of honor during a 5:30 p.m. reception this Saturday, April 23, in the manse next to St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St.

Father Frechette will visit the Rochester suburb to thank Pittsford's residents, including members of St. Louis Church, for their support of Our Little Brothers and Sisters Orphanage and Hospice in the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

According to *USA Today*, and other information, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with a 70 to 80 percent unemployment rate. One-third of the island's inhabitants has no access to clean drinking water, and most Haitians are unable to read or write.

St. Louis' Hunger Task Force has raised thousands of dollars for the orphanage where 285 children are currently receiving food, education and health care. The hospice is currently treating nearly 1,100 children, many of whom were dropped off at Mother Teresa's home for the needy.

Other organizations that have helped Father Frechette's work are the Pittsford-Perinton Kiwanis and the New York Friends of the Orphans, which assists orphans in Haiti, Honduras and Mexico.

Wine and cheese will be served at the public reception.

For information, call Bob McNamara, 716/381-5952 or 264-5814. McNamara can also provide information on child sponsorships in Haiti.

Buff offered possible plea bargain

ROCHESTER — A former Aquinas teacher and administrator accused of abusing two teenage boys at a Catholic high school in Troy, has been offered a plea bargain.

If Brian C. Buff accepts the plea bargain, he would be sentenced to three to nine years in prison.

Gary Muldoon, Buff's attorney, said he and the Monroe County District Attorney's office worked out an agreement which would involve guilty pleas to three felony charges — one each in Monroe, Albany and Rensselaer counties.

State Supreme Court Justice John D. Doyle, who is presiding over the cases in all three counties, has given Buff until April 21 to decide whether he will accept the plea offer.

In Monroe County, Buff is charged with two counts

each of third-degree sodomy, third-degree sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child, and one count each of fifth-degree conspiracy and second-degree harassment.

He faces similar charges in Albany and Rensselaer counties.

Buff, who worked at Aquinas from 1988-91, and then again in 1993, allegedly abused the two teenage students at Catholic Central High School in Troy. Buff served as assistant principal at the school from September, 1991, to December, 1992.

Some of the alleged incidents of abuse involving the boys took place in Monroe County. Buff is also accused of abusing a female employee at Aquinas Institute while he worked at the Rochester Catholic high school in 1993.

Courier wins 12 awards at New York Press Association convention

The *Catholic Courier* captured 12 awards — its best showing ever — during the New York Press Association's 1993 Bettors Newspaper Contest. Presented during the association's annual spring convention, held April 15-16 at The Desmond in Albany, the awards cover submissions from weekly papers published from January to December, 1993.

Staff photographer S. John Wilkin won four awards, including Photographer of the Year. It marked the second consecutive year in which a staff photographer for the *Courier* won this award. Judges said Wilkin's portfolio presentation "puts this photographer in a class by himself." Judges also complimented Wilkin on having "good variety

in subject matter."

The *Courier*, namely Wilkin, was also awarded first place in photographic excellence in Division IV.

"His photos feel and breathe — Wow!," commented one judge.

Wilkin also won first place for sports feature photo and second place for best feature photo in Division II.

The *Courier* also won first place in graphic illustration for Matthew Morgaine's April 22 front page illustration accompanying a story on the Campaign for Human Development. The illustration depicted one hand uprooting a plant called "poverty" and another hand planting seeds called "hope."

First place for best color advertisement also went to the *Courier*, for a two-page ad on Catholic schools.

Senior staff writer Lee Strong won second place for best news story in Division III for his May 13 article marking the one-year anniversary of the "Spring of Life" protests in Buffalo.

"A very well-balanced story on an issue that has some very emotional extremes," commented one judge.

Strong also received honorable mention in Division IV for his feature story

on Catholic mystery writer Edward Hoch.

Staff writer Mike Latona was awarded third place in spot news coverage in Division IV for his Aug. 19 story on the pope's visit to Denver for World Youth Day.

"Latona covers not only the news, but also the emotion of this story," the judges said.

The *Courier* also received honorable mentions in the following categories:

Best Front Page: In Division II, for stories by Latona and staff writer Rob Cullivan, photos by Wilkin, and graphics by Morgaine and Lorraine Hennessey, graphics manager.

"Great stories and graphics," the judges said.

Historical or Anniversary Edition: In Division 2, for its Sept. 30 125th diocesan anniversary and synod supplement.

The supplement also won a Division III honorable mention for "Best Special Section — Advertising," honoring the work by Hennessey; Kim Parks, graphic artist; Bernie Puglisi, advertising manager; and Kathy Welsh, advertising account executive.

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