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Efforts mount

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"If people get to know each other and trust each other, and know that we take care of their day-to-day needs, then they won't have to resort to violence," Lombard explained. The parish also sponsored a hot dog roast last summer and held a free Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 21

A number of other parishes have likewhe attempted to reach out to the community: Rochester's Blessed Sacrament Parish, for example, is attempting to establish a midnight basketball program. St Augustine's Parish, part of the Ronian Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, is providing office space for a ciedit union to serve the poor.

Sister Beth LeValley, SSJ, who is helping coordinate the effort to open a credit union, noted that economic pressures ate linked to violence.

"The people who are low income for the most part have the same kinds of hopes, the same kinds of dreams that other people have, but don't have the resources to do anything about them," Sister LeValley said.

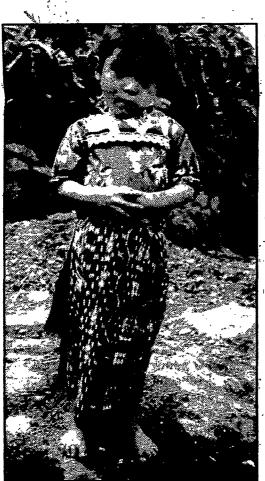
All too often, she continued, financial institutions do not meet the needs of these people. Thus a credit union is a way to empower them, and to prevent

the sense of hopelessness and frustration that can lead to violence, she acknowledged. **Diocesan offices** and parishes, and affiliated organizations, are also actively attempting to help people better their lives. The Worker Ownership **Resources Center** in Geneva, for example, began as a joint effort of **Catholic Charities** of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Social Ministry to help people create their own businesses.

Shelters and homes such as Corpus Christi Parish's Dimitri House, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, and the Catholic Family Center's Francis Hospitality Center exist to help the homeless. Bethany House provides temporary shelter and support for homeless and battered women, while Melita House offers shelter, support and assistance to young pregnant women.

The various offices of diocesan

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Catholic Charities provide counseling services to assist the victims of There's something very poverty and violence. They have simple about it to me. also been active in According to the advocating for - or against - changes teachings of Jesus at the government level on issues re-Christ, we cannot turn lated to violence, including economto violence in any way ic policy, welfare reform, abortion, euto solve problems. thanasia, the death penalty and the criminal-justice sys-

> **Public Policy Com-**Kathleen Cannon mittee, for exam-

planning an education effort and a petition campaign - scheduled for Jan. 14-15 – to oppose any legislation restoring the death penalty in New York state. Catholic Family Center, meanwhile, is working with Monroe County parishes to create a social action network.

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The diocesan

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"We've decided to focus on drugs and violence," noted Brian Kane, CFC's director of social policy and research. "Part of the way to break through the cycle of violence is to find ways for people to be healed. Just throwing them in jail is not going to break the cycle."

Thus the group is advocating for alternatives to jail for drug offenders, and for creating detoxification centers for drug users.'

Beyond direct service and advocacy, the diocese is also addressing violence through several education efforts.

Catholic schools have incorporated peace and justice, and conflict resolution into their curriculum across all subject areas, noted Sister Patricia Carroll, SSJ, assistant superintendent for government services and administration for the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools.

Sister Carroll pointed out that children having conflicts are taught ways to resolve their problems without resorting to physical or verbal violence.

The basic approach in the schools is to emphasize that students should respect each other as they would Christ, Sister Carroll observed.

"It's quite a challenge," she added.



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"We are constantly countering the cultural message" that accepts violent solutions to problems.

On the broadest level, the Synod goal of promoting the consistent life ethic which links together such issues as war, abortion, euthanasia and the death penalty - offers a general approach to issues of violence.

Cannon acknowledged that the consistent life ethic is not broadly understood. People tend to separate life issues, so that, for example, some people will argue against abortion but for the death penalty.

"How do we begin to educate around the consistent life ethic that violence in any form ... is wrong?" Cannon said. "There's something very simple about it to me. According to the teachings of Jesus Christ, we cannot turn to violence in any way to solve problems.'

Efforts are currently underway to help people to understand what the ethic involves. Ten parishes in Chemung and Schuyler counties, for example, are joining together to sponsor a Lenten series next March focusing on the consistent life ethic. The series will discuss the ethic as a whole, then will specifically target the issues linked under it.

"What we're trying to do this year is to present church teachings, and to get each parish involved," observed Gail Murray, religious education coordinator at St. Mary Our Mother Parish in Horseheads.

Likewise, Finger Lakes Social Ministry has planned its annual ministry day for parish representatives - slated for March 25 – around the consistent life ethic, reported Giovina Caroscio, the regional office's executive director.

"We see a direct link with violence and the consistent life ethic," Caroscio noted.

Caroscio's office-is also-involved with efforts to combat racism, particularly in Auburn where the youth group sponsored by St. Mary's and St. Alphonsus parishes has been at the forefront of efforts to respond to recent racial incidents at Auburn High School. Finger Lakes Social Ministry has also arranged for Campaign for Human development money to go toward Equality Circles, an Auburn organization the encourages dialogue to help counter conflict and racism.

Even this brief overview, which does not mention all programs and efforts, reveals how much is going on across the diocese to counter violence in its many forms. But despite these many activities, more work remains to be done, Cannon emphasized. The magnitude of the problem of violence in our cities, in our suburbs, in our towns, in our homes - it's everybody's problem, and nobody's doing enough," Cannon concluded.

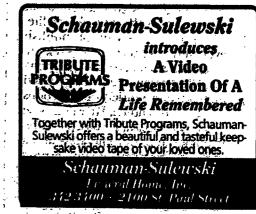
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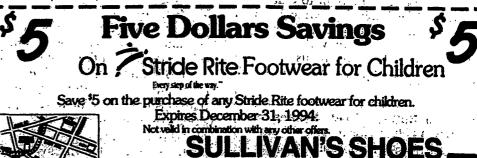
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