

Coalition calls for drug detoxification service

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Social Action Network, an organization of 21 Catholic and Protestant churches and community organizations, has announced the formation of a blue-ribbon commission to promote the expansion of drug-detoxification services in Monroe County.

Commission members made the announcement at a press conference Friday afternoon, Feb. 17, in St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St.

Among the commission's 22 members are B. Thomas Golisano, president and chief executive officer of Paychex, Inc., who ran for governor on the Independence-Fusion Party line last November.

Among other members are Carolyn Portanova, executive director of Catholic Family Center; Howard Relin, Monroe County district attorney; and several state and local political leaders, agency directors and church leaders.

Commission members stressed that detoxification services for those addicted to cocaine, heroin and other illicit drugs do not exist in Monroe County.

To buttress their point, commission members cited a Social Action Network study that found 315 to 380 Monroe County residents had to travel to Buffalo from Sept. 1992 to Sept., 1993 to obtain detox services.

Additionally, the Rev. Samuel McCree, Jr., a commission member and pastor of Rochester's Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church, stated that 175 persons have been referred to support services outside Monroe County by his church.

"In fact, today I had to refer 16 persons to detox services outside Monroe County," Rev. McCree said at the press conference.

The Rev. Dwight Cook, pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church, pointed out that many people addicted to drugs are discouraged from even beginning to tackle their problem because of the un-

availability of services in the county. "When persons have to travel such a great distance (to Buffalo) ... it becomes very difficult, particularly for those who are indigent or who live on the margins of life," he said.

The commission members also cited a report from the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency that in 1993, Monroe County residents received 4,077 days of in-patient care in detox and rehabilita-

tion facilities in Erie County.

When that figure is combined with that of detox patients living in the five-county area surrounding Rochester, it climbs to 4,306 days — a figure that translates into a need for approximately 12 beds in the Rochester area, commission members noted.

The figures on patient demand for drug detox services do not include prison inmates; those who are discour-

aged from entering treatment; those who attempt detoxification on their own; those who enter treatment without first detoxifying; and those who seek treatment in other areas of the state, the commission explained.

Six "drug crisis" beds will be available at a new treatment facility to be opened this year in the city, but the commission believes more beds are needed and are calling for a nine-bed unit to be established.

The Rev. Gayle Harris, co-chair of the commission and rector of St. Luke & St. Simon, said that at least one area hospital has discussed with the commission the possibility of establishing a detox unit. She declined to identify the hospital, however.

Felice Armignacco, vice chairwoman of the Social Action Network, stated that no funds have been procured for establishing a detox unit, but she estimated start-up cost for the project to be about \$100,000. Armignacco said the commission would likely seek start-up funds from foundations once it had found a facility interested in establishing the detox unit.

A letter to SAN's Chairman James Carroll from Rochester's Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr., indicated that the city was unable to provide funding for a detox unit.

However, the mayor's letter did state "this administration is committed to fostering the relationships necessary to make SAN's goals a reality."

In other SAN news, the network recently elected officers to its executive committee for one-year terms.

The new officers are: James Carroll, chairman; Felice Armignacco, vice chairwoman; Bob Selleck, membership coordinator; Terri Schmitt, media coordinator; Father Richard O'Connell, fundraising coordinator; and Father Neil Miller, research coordinator.

Formed in 1993, SAN is devoted to affecting institutional change on critical social-justice issues. For information about SAN, call 716/262-7021.

Celebrating heritage



S. John Wilkin/Staff Photographer

The Perinton African American Heritage Committee sponsored a Black Heritage Show and Soul Food Taste on Feb. 18 at Pittsford Mendon High School. This year's theme focused on 'Kujichagulia,' or self-determination, Kwanzaa's second principle. (Above) The Children's Chorus performs 'The Eagles Who Thought They Were Chickens.' (Left) Ann Brooks of the committee's Heavenly Voices group sings 'One Song.'

A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be greatly appreciated.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS
WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?
FOR HOLY CHURCH AND FOR PRIESTS

O my Jesus, I beg You on behalf of the whole Church: Grant it love and the light of Your Spirit and give power to the words of priests so that hardened hearts might be brought to repentance and return to You, O Lord.

Lord, give us holy priests; You Yourself maintain them in holiness. O Divine and Great High Priest, may the power of Your mercy accompany them everywhere and protect them from the devil's traps and snares which are continually being set for the souls of priests.

May the power of Your mercy, O Lord, shatter and bring to naught all that might tarnish the sanctity of priests, for You can do all things. I ask You, Jesus, for a special blessing and for light for the priests before whom I will make my confessions throughout my lifetime. Amen.

Mass-Rosary-Fasting-Day Offering
Eucharistic Adoration
Offering of Sufferings
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His Priests.

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Look for next month's MPRP CALENDAR in the Catholic Courier's MARCH 30th issue.

St. Ann's Home wants to build 120-unit residence for seniors

ROCHESTER — St. Ann's Home, 1500 Portland Ave., is proposing to build 120-unit adult community home for middle-class senior citizens on two parcels of recently purchased land, according to Eileen Ryan-Maruke, spokeswoman.

The proposed home would provide one- and two-bedroom apartments for seniors 62 and older who live on incomes between \$25-35,000 per year, Ryan-Maruke said. In exchange for monthly rent, residents would receive one meal daily; weekly housekeeping and flat linen service; activities, utilities, and scheduled transportation.

Ryan-Maruke said St. Ann's would conduct research with a focus group of area seniors sometime next month to determine whether the proposed community should offer other services.

Sister Marie Michelle Peartree, St. Ann's president and chief executive officer, noted that her institution believes a need for such housing exists in the areas it serves — Irondequoit, Greece and Webster.

"We feel the adult community would be natural addition to our campus and would continue to fulfill our mission and commitment to Rochester's older persons," Sister Peartree said in a statement.

The new community would sit on eight acres of land currently occupied by a car wash and a bowling center. Ryan-Maruke said the new community's construction would be financed by St. Ann's Foundation, but she was unable to offer an estimated construction cost, or an average apartment rental figure at this time.

Rob Cullivan

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Column Notice
Bishop Matthew H. Clark's Along the Way column will return in the March 2 issue.