

# Parenting

## Holy Spirit family promotes conference in Toronto

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

A nation is only as strong as its families, according to Timothy J. Hansen, a parishioner at Church of the Holy Spirit in Penfield.

A first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves, Hansen, 36, said he came to that conclusion while stationed in South Korea in 1987. Unlike many of his colleagues in the service, who saw duty in the Asian country as a burden, Hansen said his year there opened his eyes to the importance of strong ties among blood relatives.

"I feel blessed that I was sent to Korea," Hansen said. "What I gained from the South Koreans was that they were so family-oriented. They have a respect for older people."

Now, with his wife, Eran, Hansen is living out his beliefs by helping to promote the Second Pan-American Conference on Family and Education, to be held May 27-30 at Regal Constellation Hotel in Toronto, Canada. The first such conference was held during the United Nation's International Year of the Family, 1994, in Monterrey, Mexico.

In collaboration with a number of family organizations from



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

From left, Rosemary, 5, John Paul, 3, and Michael, 1, ham it up for the camera. The children's parents, Timothy and Eran Hansen, are promoting the second Pan-American Conference on Family and Education to be held May 27-30 in Toronto. (The entire family is pictured on the cover of this section.)

throughout the world, the conference will examine the theme of "Building the Civilization of Love," a phrase taken from Pope John Paul II's 1994 "Letter to Families."

"(T)he civilization of love is

possible; it is not an utopia," the pope wrote, adding that such a civilization is one whose interpersonal relationships resemble those within a healthy family.

The Hansens are big fans of the pontiff and even named one of their three children, John Paul, age 3, after him. It was the pope's promotion of the "Year of the Family" in 1994 that inspired Eran Hansen to organize a homemaking seminar for working and non-working mothers at her parish that year.

"I really felt it was my little way of contributing to the pope," she said.

The Hansens are one of dozens of U.S. and Canadian couples publicizing the confer-

ence. The couple met in Boston when Timothy was stationed there, and Eran was employed there. They married in 1989, and have moved around the country depending on where Timothy was stationed.

When he decided to leave active duty in the army, the Hansens moved to the Rochester area, of which Eran is a native.

"I always liked Rochester," Timothy said. "It seemed like a nice place to raise a family."

A conference organizer and friend of the Hansens asked if they would help promote this year's Toronto event, they said. It is sponsored by the Mexico-based World Association for Family and Education, the Cana-

da-based organization Family Life, Development and Culture, the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family, and Ernescliff College in Toronto.

The couple noted that the Diocese of Rochester has publicized the conference in mailings to parishes, and the Hansens themselves have sent letters to 128 diocesan Catholics.

The Hansens pointed out that diocesan Catholics, particularly those closest to Canada, may consider commuting and attending the conference for one-day sessions, rather than staying in Toronto overnight.

They added that a number of non-Catholic speakers will be at the conference, and that it is open to people of all faiths.

"It's for all that really want to learn more about family, family life, living and making it better," Timothy Hansen said.

Workshops will examine the following themes: "The Family: The Cradle of the Civilization of Love"; "Educating for the Civilization of Love"; "Building the Appropriate Community"; "The Media, the Family and the Civilization of Love"; and "Economics for the Civilization of Love."

Featured speakers will include New York Post film critic Michael Medved, co-host of PBS' "Sneak Previews" show and author of *Hollywood Vs. America*. His wife, Dr. Diane Medved, co-authored *The American Family: Discovering the Values that Make Us Strong*, with former U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle, and she will also speak at the conference.

Presentations will be made in English, French and Spanish, and by speakers from all over the globe.

Dr. Janine Langán of the University of Toronto will give the conference's keynote speech, and other speakers include Dr. Margaret Ogala, a pediatrician and director of a hospice for HIV-positive orphans in Kenya, and Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

Babysitting will be available. For information on fees and registration, call the Hansens at 716/381-3619, or call 416/733-7677.

You can write the conference at: II Pan-American Conference on Family and Education, P.O. Box 372, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada, M3C 2S7.

A conference Internet Web site has been established to provide the most current information, and is located at <http://www.stria.ca/wafe>.

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