

# SENIOR LIFESTYLES

## Fundraisers take strides for Center with the Aging

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

BRIGHTON — The normal scene at Our Lady of Mercy High School's track is of teenage athletes racing toward top performances.

But on May 4, strollers from 8 to 80 were leisurely rounding the oval. Despite the noncompetitive slower pace, these supporters of the third annual "Walk of Ages" were working toward their own goal: raising funds for the Mercy Center with the Aging.

Approximately 200 people joined in the Walk of Ages, a benefit for the Center with the Aging. According to Sister Anne Maloy, RSM, the center's director, the walk garnered close to \$7,000.

An occasional jogger could be spotted, but most participants chose to walk their laps as they earned pledges they had solicited prior to the event. Conditions were cold and damp, but the enthusiastic walkers and onlookers maintained a festive atmosphere — from a walker dressed in a clown outfit, to cries of triumph from the raffle winners.

Though she was not a walker, Trudy Wisner came out to root on her 8-year-old granddaughter, Katelyn Balconi. Wisner, who laughingly gave her age as "over 39," is a parishioner at Brighton's Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

Carol Henretta, 59, an advisory-board



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

From left, Ann Byrne and Dolores Schock from St. Ann's Church in Rochester, and Felice Armignacco from St. Rita's Church in Webster, make their 18th lap around the Mercy High School track during the "Walk of Ages" walkathon May 4. The annual fundraiser supports the Mercy Center with the Aging and its efforts to provide information and education for older adults and their family care-givers.

member for the Center with the Aging, assisted at the Walk of Ages by helping to conduct raffles. She originally became involved with the center by taking a course while caring for her mother, who died in 1995. Though she is a registered nurse, Henretta said the course

helped her with aspects that went beyond health care.

"There are a lot of emotional and psychological things you have to deal with when you're caring for someone you love very much. And, you see a lot of other people who are going through the

same issues," remarked Henretta, a parishioner at Greece's Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

Henretta's experience is typical of many who seek out the Center with the Aging. The facility, formerly at Rochester's Holy Family Church, is now at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. It offers education, training and referral services to those providing care for senior citizens.

According to Sister Maloy, the center provides four basic functions: to help care-givers and older adults gain access to services; to provide knowledge about the health-care system; to lend advice in financial planning; and to provide spiritual support.

Sister Maloy added that community education is another priority of the Center with the Aging. She encourages parishes and school districts to develop programs — such as parish health ministries — to address senior-related issues.

Sister Maloy pointed out that this knowledge becomes more vital in an era of lengthening life expectancies.

"Right now the fastest growing group within the aging population is over 85," Sister Maloy said. In many cases, she noted, "A woman will spend 20 years caring for her children and 20 more years caring for a dependent parent."

EDITORS' NOTE: For more about Mercy Center with the Aging, call 716/244-5190.

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