

to Life

Diverse consistent life efforts share diocesan funds

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

Diocesan officials have regularly pointed out that the Consistent Life Ethic covers more than just abortion, war and the death penalty.

And the list of 1997 Consistent Life Ethic Grant Fund award winners reflects that view.

This year, the diocese will distribute \$30,000 in CLE funds to groups in the diocese dealing with such issues as welfare, parenting, jail ministry, health care, nutrition and sexual abstinence.

The money to support those efforts came from respect life funds provided through the annual Thanks Giving Appeal and an annual fundraising dinner, held May 10. A committee evaluated requests for funding and decided who would receive the awards.

Recipients this year include such established programs as the various offices of Birthright, Melita House, Faith Haven, Pax Christi and Catherine McAuley Housing, but also a number of efforts just getting off the ground.

"I think the grants show a support of grass-roots efforts," observed Suzanne Schnitman, the Diocese of Rochester's consistent life ethic coordinator. "We're supporting all kinds of consistent life ethic efforts."

Sister Chris Wagner, SSJ, has her own way of defining what the consistent life ethic entails.

"The consistent life ethic, as it's interpreted here, is dealing with the whole person," said Sister Wagner, director of Rochester's St. Joseph Neighborhood Center, which received a \$1,000 CLE grant this year. "Many people who come through the door are at the edge of survival in most basic areas of



Greg Francis/Staff photographer
Delroy Gillespie of Rochester has his blood pressure checked during a physical by nurse practitioner Ann Marie Ebling Sept. 25 at St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, South Avenue, Rochester. The center uses Consistent Life Ethic Grant monies to help pay for prescriptions and lab tests.

shelter, and physical and mental health."

St. Joseph's staff will use the CLE funds to help pay for lab work and prescriptions for people who come to the center's health clinic, she said.

Sister Wagner pointed out that many of the people aided by the center are underinsured or uninsured, and can't afford adequate health care. But health care often proves the way to help the people deal with broader issues, she added.

"As we establish a relationship, we then get the rest of the story," she explained.

The rest of the story often includes helping the people get into counseling, find treatment for drug and alcohol problems, deal with stress, and obtain tutoring to help them pass the high school equivalency test (GED).

The CLE grant is especially important as the 5-year-old center has experienced a marked increase in the number of people

coming for help, Sister Wagner noted. She pointed out that the number of new people seen jumped from 1,400 in the 1995/96 fiscal year to 2,200 in the 1996/97 fiscal year.

"We know we are there fulfilling a need, and that's confirmed by the numbers that are coming in," Sister Wagner remarked.

Feminists for Life have a different form of "confirmation" of their efforts to promote the pro-life message on colleges.

It is in the form of direct attacks on the Feminists for Life efforts by Planned Parenthood, the nation's leading provider of abortions, in the spring edition of the pro-choice organization's internal newsletter, *INSIDER*.

At issue are packets that Feminists for Life planned to distribute to campus ministers and resident counselors detailing "what sorts of services are available for (students) if they're pregnant," explained Kerri-Ann Kiniorski, vice president for communications for the national Feminists for Life and editor of the Feminists for Life of New York newsletter.

The 1997 CLE Grant Fund awards

- Birthright, Auburn;
- Birthright, Ontario;
- Birthright, Victor;
- Birthright, Canandaigua;
- Finger Lakes Social Ministry Adult and Teen Program;
- House of John, Clifton Springs;
- Faith Haven, Naples;
- Parenting for Prevention, Naples/Prattsburg Catholic Community;
- Spirit Inside, Spirit Outside jail ministry, St. Michael's Parish, Penn Yan;
- Auburn Hospitality Association;
- Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier Teens and Family Outreach;
- Birthright, Owego;
- Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, Hornell;
- Chemung County Welfare Reform;
- Birthright, Geneseo;
- Teresa House, Livingston County;
- Catholic Charities of Livingston County Legal Aid;
- Bethany House, Rochester;
- Cameron Community Ministries, Rochester;
- Catherine McAuley Housing, Rochester;
- Green Acres Pantry, Rochester;
- Journey Home Comfort Care, Greece;
- Melita House, Rochester;
- Rogers House, Rochester;
- St. Joseph Neighborhood Center, Rochester;
- Legal Aid Immigration Project, Monroe County;
- Project Rachel, Rochester;
- Birthright/Catholic Family Center, Rochester;
- Pax Christi, Rochester;
- Sex, Truth and Decisions, Monroe County;
- Feminists for Life of New York, Rochester;
- Common Ground, Rochester.

The organization also helps to supply literature for college pro-life groups, and advertises in college newspapers to let students know about alternatives to abortion. Feminists for Life of New York will receive \$1,000 in CLE funds to help continue these efforts in colleges in the diocese.

While Feminists for Life members are venturing onto college campuses, representatives of Rogers House will be traveling to prisons with the aid of CLE funds.

The outreach ministry of Corpus Christi Parish, Rochester, will

use \$200 in CLE funds to continue regular discussion and support sessions with prisoners at Groveland Correctional Facility. It also is scheduled to start working with inmates at Orleans Correctional Facility. When released, some of the inmates will live at Rogers House as they reintegrate into society.

The purpose of the in-prison groups and Rogers House is to help the ex-offenders look at their lives, according to the programs' director, Jim Smith.

"What we're interested in doing is giving the ex-offenders a safe place to deal with the issues in their lives," Smith said. The message being conveyed, he added, is that they "are very much deserving of the love and concern of the church community."

Parishioners at the Naples-Prattsburg Roman Catholic Community will be directing love and concern to families, with help from a CLE grant.

The parish will offer a series of 20 sessions of Parenting for Prevention, on such topics as abstinence education, preventing drug abuse, conflict resolution, communication skills and teaching peace and loving discipline.

The joint project of the parish social ministry and Christian formation committees will use \$1,000 in CLE funds and a matching grant from the parish for speakers, according to Peggy Ruscio, social ministry committee chairwoman.

"It seems like something like this is so needed," Ruscio said.

The parish had tried the program last year using a group discussion format, Ruscio said. This year, with the help of the CLE and parish funds, the program will focus on getting speakers "to make it more of an information program. Now we can get the caliber of speakers we want."

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