

DIOCESAN NEWS

Ministry in 15th year; has served thousands

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Finger Lakes Social Ministry in Geneva marked its 15th anniversary with a dinner Oct. 17, during which 51 lay people received certificates of appreciation for social ministry work at their parishes.

The anniversary celebration at Club 86 in Geneva was attended by about 400 people, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of the Diocese of Albany, who gave the keynote speech.

One of the lay honorees, Debbie Patrick, expressed pleasure at being able to dine with so many social ministry advocates.

"I just thought it was one of the best gatherings of people I've ever met," Patrick said in a phone interview from her Moravia home.

Patrick chairs the social ministry committee for Cayuga Team Ministry, a cluster of four parishes: St. Patrick's, Aurora; St. Joseph's, Cayuga; St. Michael's, Union Springs; and her church, Our Lady of the Lake, King Ferry.

In addition to the lay honorees like Patrick, Finger Lakes Social Ministry also honored Father Charles F. Mulligan at the anniversary dinner for his role in helping to establish the office in 1982 when he was director of diocesan social ministry. The priest currently serves as co-pastor of St. Michael's Church, in Penn Yan, along with Father Peter Deckman.

A regional office of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, Inc., Finger Lakes Social Ministry serves Cayuga, On-

tario, Wayne, Seneca and Yates counties. The agency provides a variety of programs for thousands of area residents, including counseling services, maternity and parenting programs and food and nutrition outreach.

Father Mulligan and Giovina Caroscio, the agency's executive director since its founding, spoke about Finger Lakes Social Ministry's first 15 years in an interview at the agency's Geneva headquarters on Oct. 10.

Caroscio noted that working out of a Catholic social agency allows her and other employees to be more vocal about why they do what they do than they might be at a secular agency.

"The reason I do this work is because of my commitment to the Gospel message," she said. "I think it's something that's inherent in our Catholic tradition."

The agency grew out of diocesan efforts in the 1970s to decentralize diocesan social ministry, which had traditionally been headquartered in Monroe County, Father Mulligan explained.

"It's an ongoing process to be as close to the problem as you can," he said.

In the years since the agency opened its headquarters in Geneva, many of the problems it set out to tackle have grown, according to Caroscio. For example, she noted, in the last few years, requests by low-income families for direct financial assistance have increased significantly.

"For every one we help, we turn two away," she said.

State and federal welfare cuts and reform combined with the region's economic problems have meant people are

are derived from TGA funds.

A recently created program, Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium, will also benefit from TGA funding. This strategic planning effort, begun in 1996, is already underway in one-third of diocesan parishes. The process is headed by William Pickett, the diocese's first full-time director of planning.

Otherwise, D'Agostino noted, this year's TGA objectives will contain relatively few new wrinkles.

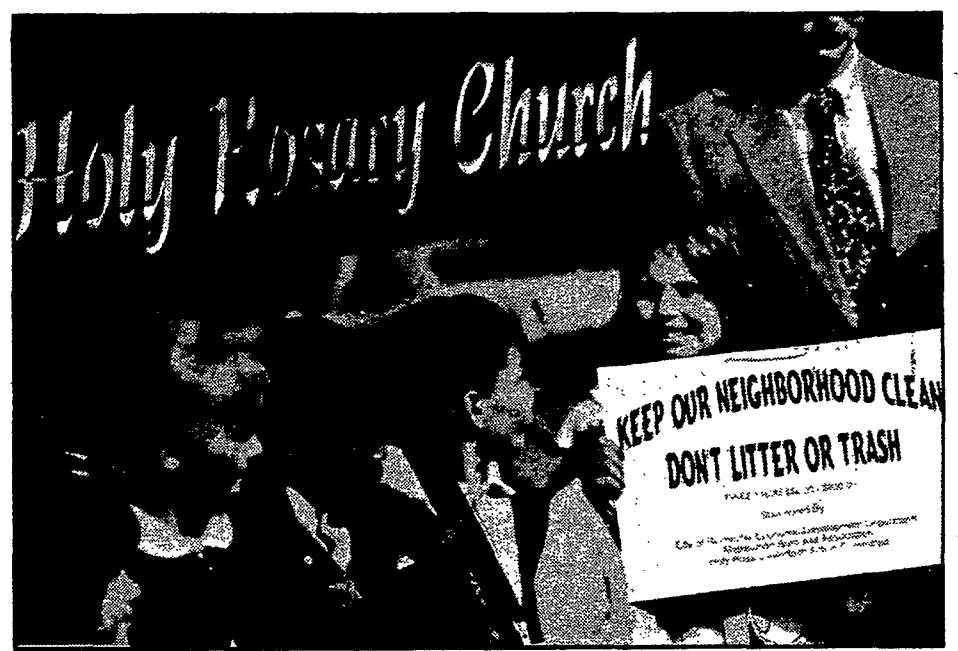
"I go back to the parish volunteers and ask, 'What do you want to do that's new and different?' They say, 'It's not broke, so don't fix it,'" D'Agostino said.

The 1997-98 appeal's theme is "Give Back with a Thankful Heart." In an Oct. 22 statement released by the diocesan Office of Communications, Bishop Matthew H. Clark said that this theme calls "all members of faith communities to return to the Lord a share of what has so generously been given to us. The TGA is important to us because it supports a range of activities which increase our capacity to know, to celebrate and to give witness to our faith. In addition, TGA gifts help the church reach out to those in need, whatever their beliefs, in pursuit of justice and peace for all."

D'Agostino noted that 59,400 donors made contributions in 1996-97, ranging from individual pledges of \$12,000 to "children giving 50 cents and writing a nice note to the bishop."

One of the keys to the TGA's success has been an increase in parish-based TGA volunteers. This source of support has increased from 400 volunteers in 1992 to nearly 1,000, D'Agostino said.

"They're out there making tables, making hundreds of phone calls and stuffing envelopes," he remarked.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Keep it clean

Holy Rosary School third-grader Ashley Lathrop holds a "clean neighborhood" sign to be posted in the Dewey Avenue and Driving Park area in Rochester Oct. 16. "These signs help to visually reinforce the (cleanup) work we are doing," said Holy Rosary member and Interfaith Action representative James Patrick-Maxwell. The neighborhood cleanup and sign postings are a cooperative effort of Holy Rosary Church, the Maplewood Business Association and the City of Rochester Economic Development Department.

turning increasingly to private agencies like Finger Lakes Social Ministry to meet their needs, she said. But Caroscio and Father Mulligan also pointed to some bright spots on the social justice horizon.

For example, 15 years ago, many Catholics in the area had little or no knowledge of the church's vast body of social justice teaching, a problem that's been rectified in part by agency-sponsored forums and workshops on such issues as farmworker rights and the death

penalty, they explained.

Agency volunteers have also provided support to thousands of area residents who have lost their spouses through death or divorce, Caroscio said.

All these volunteers have come out of more than 30 parishes linked together in social ministry work through the agency, Father Mulligan said.

"Parishes are too small a base to deal with social structure problems," the priest said. "You need a broader base."

TGA slates goal of \$5 million as 1997-98 campaign begins

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Although the 1997-98 Thanks Giving Appeal — which begins over the next several weeks — is striving to raise an all-time high of \$5 million, recent history indicates that the goal will likely be met.

Thomas D'Agostino, diocesan director of giving, noted that the appeal's overall goal has been either reached or surpassed for five consecutive years. The 1996-97 appeal brought in \$4,940,000, exceeding the campaign goal of \$4.9 million.

The TGA also enjoyed an exceptional follow-up on 1996-97 pledges, with 97 percent of all pledged money being collected.

"That's extraordinarily high for a fundraising effort. Normally, if it was 90 percent, you'd be dancing in the streets," D'Agostino said.

The annual fundraising effort begins as volunteer speakers promote "Commitment Weekends" (Oct. 25-26, Nov. 1-2 and Nov. 8-9) in diocesan parishes. D'Agostino added that 120,000 TGA packages were recently mailed to all registered Catholic households in the diocese.

Pledges for the 1997-98 campaign will be sought until early December. TGA officials and volunteers will collect the pledges through next spring.

This year marks the 17th annual Thanks Giving Appeal. The campaign serves as the diocese's largest source of funds, totaling approximately half the diocesan budget.

D'Agostino said that TGA funding is critical to such diocesan-operated programs as education; faith formation; Catholic Charities; parish support services; support to inner-city parishes; and campus ministry. In addition, he said that the salaries of Pastoral Center employees

Announcing
The City of Geneva's

HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

* Funds Available to Help Purchase Homes *

The City of Geneva has funds to help income-eligible, credit worthy persons purchase homes in the City. You do not have to live in Geneva currently to qualify.

If you have a household income within the guidelines listed below and would like to purchase a home in Geneva, the City and local banks can help!

1 person household.....	\$26,450
2 person household.....	\$30,200
3 person household.....	\$34,000
4 person household.....	\$37,750
5 person household.....	\$40,800
6 person household.....	\$43,800

The City, in conjunction with the National Bank of Geneva, Community Bank N.A., and the Savings Bank of the Finger Lakes, will provide deferred, low-interest loan funds, reduced downpayment requirements, and other incentives to help people purchase one- and two-family homes in all areas of the City. Limited funds are also available for rehabilitation.

For more information call or see:

Karen Quartaro
City Department of Planning and Economic Development
City Hall, 47 Castle Street
315-789-4393

Attend Our
HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM OPEN HOUSE
1-4 p.m.
Saturday, October 25
at the
Lakefront Ramada