

FEATURE

Twenty-somethings aid Habitat for Humanity

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Kristen Caruso, a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church, 534 Oxford St., thinks people in their 20s can get too caught up in their own little worlds. That's why she volunteered to work on a Habitat for Humanity house being built on Hoeltzer Street in the city.

"I find that a lot of my friends tend to be pretty self-absorbed with their time," she said. "I've been pretty self-absorbed as far as my time goes."

Caruso, 27, likes to work out on a regular basis, so the fact that she could mix cement and do foundational work on the house appealed to her need for physical activity, she said.

"I thought this was a good cause to bring people together," she added.

Twenty-four Catholics in their 20s and 30s came together on Oct. 18, to work on three houses being built on Hoeltzer and Evergreen streets, according to Ellen Hughes. A parishioner at St. Mary's in downtown Rochester, Hughes, 24, helped to organize the volunteers on behalf of Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young adult network.

All three houses are being built under the auspices of Flower City Habitat for Humanity, the Rochester branch of the national ecumenical not-for-profit organization that builds homes for low-income people. In exchange for interest-free mortgages, the home-owners must contribute 500 hours of labor — or "sweat equity" as it's called — toward building both their own houses and those of others.

Hughes and Caruso were part of a morning shift of Odyssey volunteers who worked on a house that will be owned by Patricia Green, a mother of two sons.

"I want to be able to leave something for my children," said Green, a maintenance worker for the City of Rochester. "I simply cannot afford to buy a home, and this is a way for me to have a home."

The house's construction is being sponsored by the Eastman Kodak Company, and it is one of five being built on Hoeltzer by Habitat. A total of eight homes built by Habitat will eventually stand on Hoeltzer, including one currently being built jointly by St. Theodore's Church in Gates and Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, according to a Habitat official.

"I've never done this before, and I was interested in the goodwill of Habitat for Humanity," said Brenda Kamper, 27, a parishioner at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Flower City Park.

"For those who can give back to the community, I think it's very important for them to do so," Kamper continued. "There are so many 'have-nots' that those who 'have' need to give back."

Kathleen Caffrey, 27, a parishioner at



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Kathy Gilman rakes fresh soil laid by Odyssey participants Oct. 18 at 16 Evergreen St., Rochester. The home was built by Habitat for Humanity in 1996. Odyssey participants volunteered their time to do yard work in cooperation with Habitat.

St. Mary's like Hughes, echoed Kamper's comments.

"I think service is a big part of my life," she said, noting she's a special education teacher. "I just saw it as a way to give of myself a little energy and time."

Repairing the roof

Speaking of altruistic young adults, the Beta chapter of Lambda Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, Inc., at Rochester Institute of Technology has given St. Michael's Church in Rochester \$1,000 to help repair the church's roof.

The roof — and other parts of the Clinton Avenue church — are in bad shape and need a lot of work, according to Sister Kay Schwenzer, pastoral associate at St. Michael's. The parish is a member of the Community of Hope cluster that also includes Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Mount Carmel parishes.

Prior to the Beta donation, St. Michael's had raised \$8,000 toward building repair, she said, but she predicted the cost of building repair would be far higher. She added that the RIT fraternity members are soliciting area businesses for added donations.

The fraternity chapter made the donation Oct. 19, after about 80 RIT students and faculty members attended 11:15 a.m. Mass at the church, home to a large number of Hispanic Catholics in the diocese. RIT's Hispanic Deaf Club is also currently raising money for the church's roof re-



pair.

The Mass was celebrated in English, Spanish and sign language, Sister Schwenzer said. RIT is home to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and Deacon Patrick Graybill, an RIT professor, interpreted the Mass by using American Sign Language.

Deacon Graybill was assisted by Abei Abrams and Jo Ellen Clark. Five RIT students joined Deacon Graybill at the altar for the Lord's Prayer. The church's hearing congregation simultaneously sang the prayer in Spanish.

Washington Pro, a fraternity member and an RIT sophomore majoring in mechanical engineering technology, said the



Anthony Slate and Jim Schmitz load a wheelbarrow at 16 Evergreen St.

chapter raised the \$1,000 by holding a Latino heritage party earlier this month.

Larry LoMigilio, an RIT associate professor in English and Spanish, approached the Beta chapter about making the donation.

"It's a lovely historic church that the RIT Hispanic students have become fond of," LoMigilio said.

Sister Schwenzer added that the chapter sold \$355 worth of tickets to a Spanish-style dinner put on by St. Michael's Parish following the Oct. 19 Mass. Pro said the fraternity chapter was happy to be of service to St. Michael's.

"When we first announced that we had raised \$1,000, it felt great," he said.

Ask the bishop

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will answer the questions of Catholic young adults on Wednesday, Oct. 29, following a pasta dinner at St. Thomas More Church, 2617 East Ave., Brighton. The event will run from 6:45 to 9:15 p.m. Bishop Clark will speak on "What Does It Mean to be Catholic? Catholic Identity for a New Millennium." Cost: \$10. Reservations needed by Oct. 27. Call Karen Rinefield at 716/328-3228, ext. 255.

Upcoming events

Good Shepherd Church, 3318 E. Henrietta Road, will welcome Catholic young adults to its 11:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Nov. 2. A brunch will follow at a local restaurant.

Odyssey will sponsor a bowling and dinner night Friday, Nov. 14, at Ladd's Bowling Center, 873 Merchants Road, Rochester. Participants can sign up separately for bowling and dinner, or for both events. For information, call Rinefield by Nov. 10 at 716/328-3228, ext. 255.

For further information about Odyssey events, call 1-800-388-7177, ext. 255.



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