

Angels Among Us

Continued from previous page
ing and entering people's homes and stealing their possessions.

Randolph said he did three stints in various state prisons for his crimes. He recalled being shackled for six hours once while being transferred from one state prison to another. The experience moved him to think of his African-American ancestors who had been slaves. But there was one difference between how he had been enslaved and how his ancestors had been chained, he said.

"It occurred to me that I did it to myself," he recalled thinking.

He learned about Corpus Christi's program to help ex-offenders while he was in prison. When he was paroled, he applied to Rogers House and was accepted. While living at Rogers House, Randolph worked at the Rogers House Restaurant for 11 months in 1994 and 1995, he said.

"I started out as a dishwasher," he said. "They trained me as a cook, but I kept messing up the pancakes," he added with a laugh.

On a more serious note, however, Randolph said his experience at the restaurant made him a new man who now works as a youth counselor for a local agency.

"I got to see what a team effort was," he said. "I got to learn how lame my excuses were."

Although Deas and Randolph are tough on themselves, they both urged citizens to consider the value of being merciful to ex-offenders.

"I'm quite sure everybody's done some things that they needed a second chance for," Deas said. "It's just that the things we did were a little more profound," she added with a chuckle.

"It's politically popular to get tough on criminals," Randolph said. "But it takes a stronger person to say 'These are human beings.'"

Besides, Randolph said, such a program as the restaurant is a lot cheaper than doing nothing to keep men and women from going back to jail where they are housed and fed at taxpayer expense.

"Between the two of us," he said of him-

self and Deas, "a quarter of a million dollars has been saved because neither of us has been in jail for three years."

Speaking of money, Rogers House Restaurant is subsidized by Corpus Christi Parish to the tune of \$50,000 a year, according to Father Jim Callan, Corpus' administrator. Ultimately, the parish would like the restaurant to become self-sufficient, but the bottom line will always be about changing people's lives, he said.

"I'm very excited that the restaurant brings the neighborhood together, and provides jobs to women and men the day they get out of prison," he said.

Elizabeth Barefoot, the restaurant's administrator, does watch the restaurant's financial bottom line. But like Father Callan, she pointed out that it was less important than what the restaurant does for its employees. Although she is not an ex-offender herself, she echoed many of the points made by Randolph and Deas.

"I've seen people just transform here, blossom like flowers," she said. "And I like being a part of that."

Restaurant's daily doings

Rogers House Restaurant is at 271 Central Park, Rochester. Its hours are 6:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday; and 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday.

The restaurant serves a fish fry every Friday from 4 to 8 p.m.

Rogers House also caters, and can accommodate business meetings.

The restaurant plans a Super Bowl party on Sunday, Jan. 25. Admission will cost \$25, but will be free to the homeless.

The restaurant welcomes donations and volunteers. For information, call 716/232-2749, or send a fax to 232-3521.

CHAPEL OAKS OPENS ITS DOORS TO YOU!



NOW OPEN



ROCHESTER'S FINEST RETIREMENT VALUE
1550 Portland Avenue Rochester, NY 14621

Chapel Oaks, Rochester's newest and finest retirement community, is now open. And this opens the door to a whole new way of retirement living for you!

Because Chapel Oaks is a rental community, its value can be seen in so many ways, not the least of which is our affordable monthly rental fees. As a Chapel Oaks resident, you receive all the services, all the amenities and all the facilities of a full-service retirement community without an entrance fee!

That's right. ZERO Entrance Fee!

And that includes priority access to a full continuum of health and long-term care services right on St. Ann's campus. In and of itself, that peace of mind is a rare value that just can't be measured.

Simply put, the retirement lifestyle at Chapel Oaks offers the quality of life you're

looking for at a surprisingly affordable value. And you can become a part of it all.

Don't wait any longer to open the door to a new and exciting retirement lifestyle! Stop by and see all we have to offer. Be one of the first to meet our new residents, tour model apartments and have all your questions answered about retirement living at Chapel Oaks. **Call (716) 342-3052 now to schedule a visit with Kathy Langton or Robin Levitt.**



An affiliate of St. Ann's of Greater Rochester, Inc.

