

DIOCESAN NEWS

Melita House acquires new facility

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Melita House, a refuge for pregnant women, is scheduled to move from its current Evergreen Street facility into the former Holy Rosary convent on Oriole Street Jan. 29 — a move, house officials say, that will permit expanded services.

According to Florence Koenig, executive director of Mercy Residential Services, part of the Holy Rosary building will be used for ongoing services currently provided by Melita House. She noted that the new facility will accommodate up to eight teens — the same number as the Evergreen Street building.

The Oriole Street structure will also allow Mercy Residential Services to implement a new program, Families First. This outreach provides temporary housing for teens under 18-years-old who have already had their babies.

Families First will have a capacity for 10 people in five suites. Koenig predicted that some current clients of Melita House are also likely candidates for the Families First program. Under the previous arrangement, women were required to move out of Melita House shortly after their babies were born.

While staying at either Melita House or Families First, Koenig said, clients are required to work toward their high-school

equivalency if they haven't already obtained it. Those who have obtained it are required to be enrolled in a job readiness program or to be actively searching for work.

Sister Janet Korn, RSM, who served as director of Melita House in 1997 and 1998, said that negotiations to acquire the Oriole Street building began in late 1997 after Mercy Residential Services officials learned the convent would be closing.

Sister Korn said that the convent offered better overall conditions than the Evergreen Street facility, located at St. Michael's Church, which had been the home of Melita House since the ministry's inception in 1980.

"The St. Michael's building needed a great deal of repairs. We thought it might be wise to put the money into a building in better condition. And, it had many more bedrooms," said Sister Korn, who now serves as social justice awareness coordinator for diocesan Catholic Charities.

Father Lawrence Murphy, Holy Rosary's pastor, said that the move is an effective means for maximizing space.

"This is an exciting ministry that is going to help people out," Father Murphy said. "Many convents in the city are closed."

The Oriole Street building is in the midst of a \$260,000 renovation, thanks to a state grant awarded to Mercy Residential Services by the Homeless Housing As-

sistance Program in September 1998. In addition, Koenig said, Families First will receive most of a \$1.16 million federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development given to Mercy Residential Services. The Families First portion of the HUD grant, which was awarded earlier this month, will be used over the next three years to support the services the program offers.

"Obviously, people think Families First is a worthwhile service," Koenig said.

The Holy Rosary convent closed in July 1998 following a steady decrease in the number of Sisters of St. Joseph residents in recent years. A farewell reception was held in the summer for the four departing sisters, and a plaque was erected in honor of all former convent residents.

Sister Kathleen Kohl, who had lived at the Holy Rosary convent for 26 years, agreed with the move, saying that so much empty space was not practical.

"It wasn't done behind anybody's back. The only bad part is, we had to leave," Sister Kohl remarked. "It was a very hard thing for the sisters to do, but it was the right thing. Nobody could be that selfish."

Sister Kohl and Sister Mary Agnes Trabold have moved to Holy Rosary at St. Bernard's Park. Meanwhile, Sister Jane Meeker lives at the Nazareth Hall convent and Sister Marie Joseph Helfrich lives at the Nazareth Academy convent.

Obituary

Helen Rubar; Tier activist



Helen L. Rubar, a longtime activist in the Southern Tier, died Dec. 26, 1998, at Ira Davenport Hospital in Bath. She was 86.

Ms. Rubar was a founding member of the Bath Peace and Justice Group. Working closely with Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier and Amnesty International, her activism efforts included protests against land mines, School of the Americas, nuclear waste dumping, arms sales and the death penalty.

"She petitioned and spent hours in freezing weather, vigiling against the Gulf War, among other causes, always smiling, lighthearted and encouraging," remarked Rita Moretti, who worked with Ms. Rubar in the Bath Peace and Justice Group.

After retiring at age 66 as a nurse anesthetist in Bath, Ms. Rubar increased her volunteering efforts by taking blood pressures for seniors, reading to day-care children and helping with her local ambulance corps.

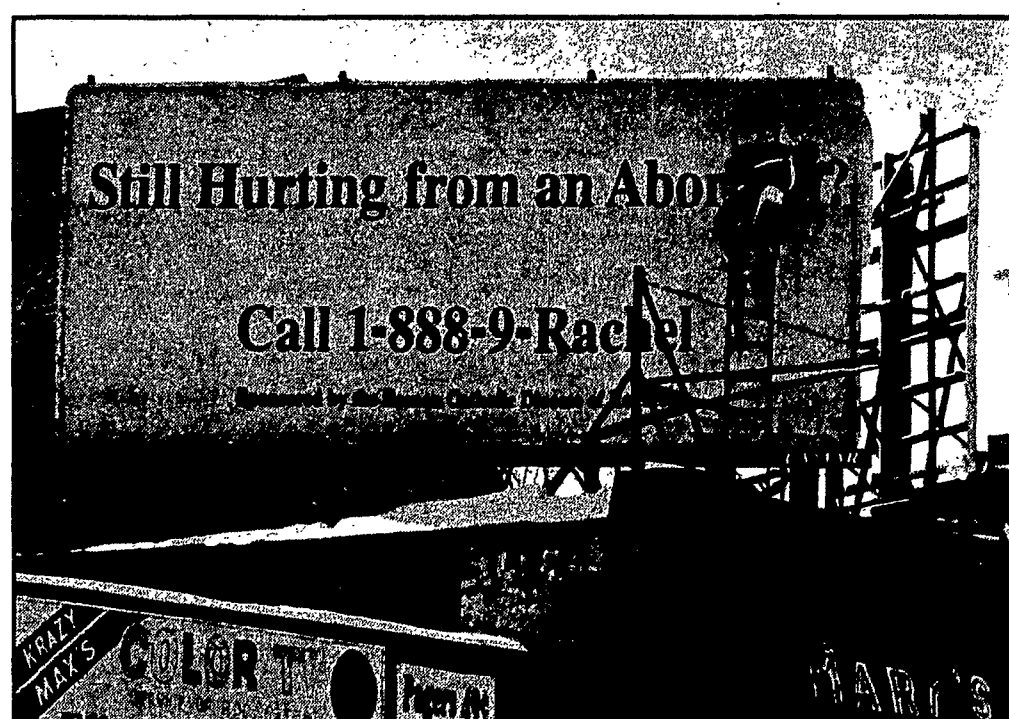
According to Moretti, one of Ms. Rubar's final efforts occurred last fall when she took part in an area Crop Walk. She raised \$200 and walked the entire 6.1 miles.

Ms. Rubar was also an active parishioner at St. Mary's Parish in Bath, where she attended daily Mass and served as a lector.

A memorial Mass for Ms. Rubar took place Jan. 14 at St. Mary's Church.

Ms. Rubar is survived by a sister, Kathleen R. Partridge; brother, Francis; and nieces and nephews.

Donations in Ms. Rubar's memory may be made to Catholic Charities or Habitat for Humanity.



Greg Francia/Staff photographer

Sign of healing

Peter Landauer of Lamar Advertising of Rochester installs a Diocese of Rochester sponsored Project Rachel billboard atop a building at the corner of Lyell Avenue and Callihan Park. The billboard is across the street from Holy Apostles Church. Project Rachel is a post-abortion outreach program sponsored by the diocese. The billboards consist of 10 separate pre-printed pieces; assembly takes approximately 30 minutes. Five Project Rachel billboards were posted throughout the city.

Recognizing

★ The Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation and Home Properties of New York were jointly given an award of merit by the Landmark Society for their work in converting the former Junior Academy in Canandaigua into the Fort Hills Apartments for seniors.

★ Nazareth College's new Service Learning Center was dedicated in November and named in honor of Sister Kathleen Weider, SSJ, director of campus ministry. The center helps coordinate community service projects for students as part of their learning experience.

★ Heather Eysman, a student at Our Lady of Mercy High School, was selected as a member of the 1998/99 Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. She plays the bassoon.

★ James Wang, a student at McQuaid Jesuit High School, was selected as a member of the 1998/99 Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. He plays the violin.

★ Megan Koch, a student at Nazareth Academy, was selected as a

member of the 1998/99 Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. She plays the cello.

★ Paul Burgett, Father Daniel J. Condon, and Anthony J. Adams Jr. have all been named to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester Stewardship Council.

Burgett is vice president and dean of students at the University of Rochester; Father Condon is pastor of the Catholic Community of Mt. Morris and Nunda; Adams is a lawyer and a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Greece.

★ Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes has received two grants totaling \$5,500 from the New York Life Foundation in the name of Joseph W. Cirencione. Cirencione, an agent with the life insurance company, is a member for the Catholic Charities agency's board of directors.

★ Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester, has received a \$500 grant from Eastman Kodak Company through Kodak's Dollars for Doers Program. The money will be used to buy lab equipment.

★ St. Agnes School, Avon, has received a \$500 grant from Eastman Ko-

dak Company through Kodak's Dollars for Doers Program. The money will be used to help fund the school's revamping of its science program.

★ Dr. Estella Norwood, a professor of social work at Nazareth College, Rochester, and director of the proposed Greater Rochester Collaborative MSW Program, has been given the 1998-99 Phi Delta Kappa Educator of the Year Award by the education fraternity. The award was presented at a Jan. 13 dinner at the Lodge at Woodcliff.

★ Dorothy Christian was named the St. Joseph's Hospital (Elmira) Employee of the Month for January. She is a cardiopulmonary assistant.

★ Jack Balinsky, Martin Moll Jr., Spencer Crow and Thomas McHugh have been elected, respectively, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer of the Providence Housing Development Corporation board of directors. Balinsky is director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester; Moll is senior vice president of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter of Rochester; Crow is vice chairman of Maple City Savings in Hornell; and McHugh is executive director of the Rochester Housing Authority.

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