

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Donor generosity opens school doors to many

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

An anonymous \$25,000 onetime donation to the Diocese of Rochester school system marks the latest effort by private donors to provide tuition assistance for diocesan school families, school officials noted.

The gift comes on top of ongoing alumni fundraising campaigns and programs specifically designed to defray tuition costs.

The anonymous donors pledged to match \$25,000 in new donations this school year that schools were to raise, according to David Meisenzahl, diocesan assistant superintendent for business. Schools actually raised \$37,000 in their effort to receive the matching funds, he noted.

The anonymous donors agreed to match \$100-\$1,000 gifts, until the total of \$25,000 was reached, Meisenzahl said. No school could be matched for than a total of \$5,000, he explained.

Working on a first-come, first-serve basis, all diocesan Catholic schools tried to

attract new donors through the matching grant program, using bulletin announcements and school newsletters, he noted.

Three schools in particular — Nativity, Brockport; St. Lawrence, Greece; and St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls — each raised between \$4,000 and \$4,500 in new funds to be matched by the anonymous grant, Meisenzahl said. He added that through the success of this matching grant program, the diocese hopes to encourage other donors to consider similar matching grant efforts.

But whatever way people want to give, it's important that they do give, according to Sister Anne Guerin, SSJ, diocesan assistant superintendent for school advancement.

"It's critical because many families can't afford the tuition," she said.

In fact, she noted that even a family that

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- Noah Rodeheffer

pays full tuition only covers two-thirds of the average cost of educating a diocesan student — about \$3,000 — and that figure excludes faculty salaries. It's that fact that is behind the inauguration of the diocese's "Fair Share Tuition Program," Sister Guerin said.

For the first time, she said, diocesan school parents will be asked at registration for the 1999-2000 school year to consider making tax-deductible money gifts during the year. Such gifts would help make up for the difference between tuition costs and actual costs, she said. According to a Fair Share flyer, the gifts will generally be used for financial aid and will stay in the donor's school.

While the Fair Share program is new, Sister Guerin added that many diocesan schools have long held some sort of annual tuition assistance fundraiser, or have active alumni who raise funds for tuition assistance. Sister Guerin said the diocese encourages Catholic school graduates to consider giving to their alma maters.

"It's important that every generation help the next one," she said.

Sister Dolores Ann Stein, RSM, principal at St. Ann's School in Hornell, echoed Sister Guerin's statements. Her school's alumni give an average \$1,000-1,500 for tuition assistance each year, as well as raise funds to defray the school's operating costs, she said.

Alumni also donate material goods to the school, which enables St. Ann's to keep its tuition costs down. Tuition at St. Ann's is \$1,125 per first child from a Catholic parish family that attends the school, she added.

"Here we're in an economically depressed area," she said of Hornell. "Without (the alumni) then we really would be facing a greater financial burden. They're a tremendous asset."

Some Catholic school parents, as well, are taking care of other students long after their own children have left the system.

Edward J. Sloan, an 82-year-old parishioner at St. Boniface, is a former school board chairman whose eight children attended St. Boniface School. Sloan now coordinates the 'Adopt' A Student program at St. Boniface. The program draws 50 to

60 donors a year, he said.

'Adopt' A Student donors — who are recruited via a parishwide mailing — are asked to give as little as \$20 a year, he said. Such donations are important, he said, because tuition starts out at \$2,100 for one child in a family from a Catholic parish, and rises to \$3,930 total for three kids from the same family.

When 'Adopt' A Student originally started in 1982, Sloan said, donors actually did give money to a specific student, but in the years hence, their donations have gone to a general tuition assistance fund. The funds are allocated on the basis of a school family's financial needs, he said.

One such supporter is Noah Rodeheffer, whose two children left the diocesan school system more than three decades ago. The ex-Marine and retired schoolteacher still spends his money on Catholic education for others.

"I always felt that the Catholic schools have much to offer, and they reinforce the values that we try to teach at home," said the 85-year-old parishioner at St. Boniface Church, Rochester.

A longtime sponsor of the parish's 'Adopt' A Student program, Rodeheffer gave \$800 to it this year.

"The people who can should really support the people who can't (pay)," he responded when asked why he donates to the 'Adopt' A Student program.

St. Boniface, along with five other Rochester schools, also doles out tuition assistance using funds from the Wegman Inner City Voucher Program, Sister Guerin said. The program — begun in 1995 by Robert and Peggy Wegman of Wegmans Food Markets Inc. — has already funneled millions of dollars in tuition assistance to students in the six schools, she said.

But Sister Guerin pointed out that diocesan Catholics should remember that all schools — including the WIN schools — can benefit from more donations.

"We've got lots of parents who need support," she said.



Greg Franica/Staff photographer

## Eyes to the grindstone

Robert and Peggy Wegman make a surprise tour Feb. 3 of Holy Rosary School, one of the six inner-city schools that the Wegman Inner City Voucher Program they founded supports. Peggy Wegman is "part of the family," visiting regularly, driving on field trips, arranging such events as a chess tournament and pizza party, according to Principal Mary Beth Fuehrer. Robert Wegman, seen by the younger children as "Mrs. Wegman's husband," was checking out the school's computer lab and other technology-related programs with his eyes on keeping the WIN schools up-to-date technologically. Here, Adam Ward, a pupil in Brenda Rutt's first-grade class, shows Robert Wegman what he can do.

## Recognizing

\* Bob Brown, Wendy Weber and Shirley Bailey were named St. Joseph's Hospital's employees of the month for, respectively, October, November and December. Brown is a respiratory function technician, Weber is a physical therapist and Bailey is supervisor of the hospital linen department.

\* Karen Kurycki and Amanda Carretto of Our Lady of Mercy High School won drawing awards at the 1999 Rochester-Finger Lakes Scholastic Art Show. Kurycki won a Gold Key Award and Carretto a Silver Key Award.

\* Joe Moran has been named by St. Agnes School, Avon, the 1999 National Catholic Education Association Catholic Elementary School Distinguished Graduate Award winner. Moran, a 1962 graduate of the school who is active in charitable projects and is currently with the law firm Moran and Kufra in Rochester, received the award during Sunday Mass Feb. 7 at St.

Agnes Church.

\* Renee Howard of Rochester, Kat Nichols and Therese Davis both of Lakeville; Gina Pizziconi of Silver Lake; Dawn Wendt of Caledonia; Bill Lissow, Nancy Lissow and Sandra Bugman, all of Nunda; Clyde Retzer of Tuscarora; Ned Holmes of Hemlock; Nancy Jones of Leicester; Eric Mendel, David Manly, Renee Bui and Jean Manly, all of Geneseo; Carl Lutz, Evelyn Lutz, Jennifer Farley and Lisa Ryan, all of Mt. Morris; Marguerite Chapman of Dansville; Judy Patrick of Leicester; and Sara DiVincenzo of Livonia were all honored for their work as mentors with the HOPE (Helping One Person Excel) Youth Mentoring Program of Catholic Charities of Livingston County. They were recognized at a dinner Jan. 21 at the Geneseo United Methodist Church.

\* Rev. Stephanie Sauve of Avon has been appointed as a member of the board of directors of Catholic Charities of Livingston County for 1999.

## Office of Liturgy releases norms for Lenten fasting

The following regulations for fast and abstinence during Lent have been issued by the diocesan Office of Liturgy.

Based on the 1983 Code of Canon Law:

• Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat for all Catholics 14 and older.

• Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting. Fasting means only one full meal and two smaller meals that, taken together, do not equal one full meal. All individuals between the ages of 18 and 59, inclusive, are bound by the laws of fasting.

• Catholics are especially encouraged to perform acts of penance during Lent.

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## Corrections

In the obituary of Father William M. Hart in the Feb. 4, 1999, edition of the *Catholic Courier*, the name of his surviving sister, Rose Ann Hart, was omitted.

In the Jan. 14, 1999, edition, due to an inaccurate press release, Msgr. William Shannon was listed in "Recognizing" as the author of the book, *Reluctant Dissenter*. The actual author is James P. Shannon.

Msgr. Shannon does have a new book out, however — *Anselm: The Joy of Faith*, released by The Crossroad Publishing Company.

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