

DIOCESAN NEWS

Student stumps for vouchers in D.C.

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

For Jeffrey R. Clark, a seventh-grader at All Saints Junior High School, Rochester, the news his essay on school vouchers won in a national contest couldn't have come at a better time.

His school volleyball team had just lost a game.

"You know how that is, you feel bad," he said.

As startled as he was about his essay winning, he seemed more surprised at the response he had received from U.S. Rep. John LaFalce, to whom he had sent the essay.

"I guess he didn't like it," Jeffrey said, disappointed that LaFalce didn't jump on the bandwagon, but instead played up other school legislation in a written response. Jeffrey wrote his essay in Jennifer Opelet's class at All Saints.

The essays were written for the RespecTeen Speak for Yourself contest, sponsored by the Lutheran Brotherhood. The rules were to write about a national public policy issue, expressing the students' own views.

A St. Pius the Tenth parishioner, Jeffrey was one of 51 essayists chosen from nearly 11,000 entrants nationwide to take part in the RespecTeen National Youth Forum in Washington, D.C. The issues essayists chose to focus on most frequently were drugs and alcohol, teen pregnancy and crime.

Jeffrey met LaFalce in person at the forum, held May 1-6, as well as various aides and even former Sen. Bob Dole.

"People were taking pictures like crazy," he said.

He noted that LaFalce took a lot of pictures of him, mentioned that he'd gone to a Jesuit college, and suggested that Jeffrey talk to his state legislators about the vouchers issue, "and tell them about it, see what they could do."

"It was fun," Jeffrey said. He added that he talked with an aide to Sen. Daniel Moynihan who said the senator supports school choice, and to an aide to Sen. Charles Schumer.

"She gave me these hard questions," he recalled, but added, "I really stumped her."



Greg Francis/Staff photographer
Jeffrey Clark, 13, a student at All Saints Catholic Junior High School, Rochester, was among 51 students at the RespecTeen National Youth Forum May 1-6 in Washington, D.C. The program attempts to teach young people their opinions matter.

Jeffrey explained that he knew he wanted to write about giving kids their choice of schools. He asked his mother if Congress had brought up any related issue, "And she said school vouchers."

He then turned to the Internet and typed in school vouchers.

"I learned a lot of things about how they helped Milwaukee and Colorado," he said, as well as a number of other areas.

He chose the topic, he said, "Mainly just because I felt strongly about giving kids a choice where they wanted to go for education, because I really wanted to get out of the previous (public) school I was in,

and Lisa Clark, Jeffrey said he would like to be either a politician or a hotel owner. A fan of the former N.Y. Mets pitcher Tom Seaver, and Goalie Patrick Roy of the Colorado Avalanche, he plays softball for All Saints. His father coaches.

In Washington, Jeffrey debated on another issue, a firearms protection act.

He acknowledged that the April 20 Columbine High School killings in Littleton, Colo., did somewhat scare him. But he was proud that his favorite team, the Avalanche, postponed its first playoff game and dedicated the playoffs to the shooting, "which is kinda nice."

"Right now at Catholic schools I get individual attention, help on whatever I need. Someone is there to ask. The teachers pay attention to all the kids.

"If you get a bad grade on a paper, you go to 'extra help,' and they go through problem and problem. Mrs. (Mary) Woodfield does the extra help. I do go to her a lot of times so I can keep my math grade where it is."

Social studies, on the other hand, is Jeffrey's forte.

"I love history," he said. "Mostly because I know so much about it, the presidents, Washington — that truly interests me." The son of Jeffrey C.

DeSales grad gives school \$1 million

An alumnus of DeSales High School in Geneva — who wished to remain anonymous — has donated \$1 million to the school, with a portion of the gift to provide partial scholarships to dozens of students each year.

"The education I received at DeSales certainly has served me well, and it's an opportunity I'd like to make available to many other families who otherwise might not be able to afford the fine education available there," the donor stated in a May 6 press release from the school.

The donor has asked that approximately 8 percent of the donation be used for scholarships to help defray the cost of tuition, which is \$2,650 a year. The rest of the money will be added to the school's permanent endowment, and be used to upgrade equipment, purchase educational materials and maintain the school.

DeSales Principal Edward J. Tracey said he was stunned by the donation, the single largest contribution to the school since it opened 87 years ago.

"Just last year we created the DeSales Institute Foundation, with a goal of raising \$5 million," Tracey said in the statement. "They always say the first million is the hardest to get... This is just wonderful."

Diocese settles suit alleging negligence

A suit by a Steuben County man who claimed the diocese was negligent in hiring and supervising Father Eugene G. Emo, has been settled.

The suit had asked for \$2 million from the priest, \$750,000 from the diocese, and \$750,000 from the operators of a residential home where the man resided.

The exact amount of the settlement was not made public, per a court order.

Father Emo had pleaded guilty to first-degree sexual abuse involving the resident, and served five months of a six-month jail sentence in 1997. He remains on administrative leave from the diocese.

Glenn E. Pezzulo, attorney for the Steuben plaintiff, said the case was recently finalized when money paid in the settlement was used to set up a trust for his client, whom he described as an emotionally and mentally challenged adult. The diocese, Father Emo, and Robert and Mary Lou McCollum of Canesteeo, all named in the suit, have settled, he added.

Paul Yesawich, attorney for the diocese, said, "Everyone is please it has been resolved."

The diocese paid "a nominal amount of money" that was less than the cost of litigating, he said, and no liability was acknowledged.

Father Kevin McKenna, diocesan chancellor, commented, "The Diocese of Rochester is pleased with the settlement in this case that we believe has been amicably resolved."

The New York State Association for Retarded Citizens had been dismissed from the suit.

— Kathleen Schwar

Rochester food cupboard buys property

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Officials of the St. Andrew's Food Cupboard have purchased the building in which the cupboard is located, and now plan to expand services to include housing.

According to Margaret Oberst, the food cupboard's chairperson, the cupboard's board of directors bid successfully for the property at 890 Portland Ave. at a Feb. 17 auction. The deal was finalized in March. The directors had learned in late 1998 that the building's landlord was facing foreclosure.

The food cupboard, a ministry of St. Andrew's Parish, is located across the street from the church. The cupboard was begun in 1978 at the parish convent, moved to 1125 North St. in 1980 and came to its current location in 1996.

"We did not want to move again," Oberst said. "There was a real sense of being called to this place."

Oberst said the food cupboard is in the process of obtaining a five-year, low-interest loan from Holy Sepulchre Cemetery for the \$28,000 purchase cost. To cover \$15,000 owed in back taxes, she added, the cupboard is using its own reserves as well as a one-year, interest-free \$10,000 loan from an anonymous donor.

Because the building became available on short notice, Oberst explained, the cupboard was forced to seek loans in order to obtain the property. A fundraising

campaign is being organized to help cover the loans as well as renovation, she said.

The two-story building includes the food cupboard as well as two one-bedroom apartments, one two-bedroom apartment and an office area. All space except for the food cupboard is currently unoccupied.

Oberst said that the apartments will be refurbished mostly by volunteers, and predicted they may be ready for occupancy before September. They will be made available for refugee resettlement and/or women in need of transitional housing. In fact, Oberst said, she has already entered into talks with the Catholic Family Center's Refugee Resettlement Program.

The cupboard is open Tuesdays through Fridays, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. According to Oberst, the cupboard has an annual operating budget of slightly more than \$20,000. It serves more than 10,000 meals per month to about 300 households in the St. Andrew's neighborhood, located in northeast Rochester.

ed in northeast Rochester.

Oberst said that the ministry runs entirely on volunteer support. The 50-member volunteer staff is derived from St. Andrew's as well as several parishes in Rochester and its suburbs. In addition, the cupboard relies on private donations of cash, food and clothing from agencies and private donors.

Along with food and clothing, Oberst noted, the cupboard offers referrals for clients in such areas as health, employment, youth, jobs, shelter and substance abuse.

"The point is to listen to someone's story, not decide if they deserve food or not," Oberst said.

Father Timothy Horan, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, felt that the cupboard's purchase of the building is a big plus for his parish and the surrounding neighborhood.

"It's come full circle, returning to the site of St. Andrew's — a happy kind of circle," Father Horan said.

Obituary

Sister Grace Marie Hansen, SSND; 73; taught at Bishop Kearney

Sister Grace Marie Hansen, SSND, who taught at Bishop Kearney High School, died Jan. 16, 1999, at the Lourdes Health Center of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Motherhouse in Wilton, Conn. She was 73. Sister Hansen, previously known as Sis-

ter Mary Georgette, entered the School Sisters Aug. 29, 1943. The Brooklyn native taught at a number of schools in Connecticut, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and New York, including Bishop Kearney (1971-79). Sister Hansen's funeral Mass was cele-

brated at the motherhouse chapel Jan. 18. She is survived by a brother, Thomas, of Brooklyn; three sisters, Maureen Grace and Gail Quinn of Brooklyn, and Grace Murphy of Shady, N.Y.; and many nieces and nephews.