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Agencies

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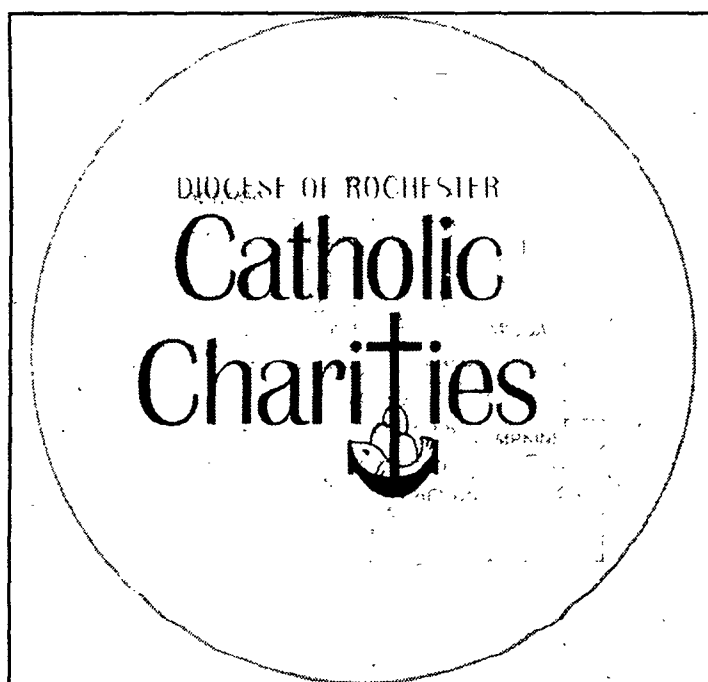
vices.

Carolyn A. Portanova is chief executive officer and president of CFC. She said that among programs the agency plans to highlight at the upcoming convention is the Rochester Women's Bean Project. Participants are low-income women who learn the business of making and marketing gourmet soups and chili mixes.

CFC also recently contracted with the Monroe County Department of Health to provide services to children 3 years old and younger who are experiencing developmental delays, she said.

Among the issues Portanova hopes to discuss with her colleagues at the convention will be how to better train her work force to better serve minority clients. Portanova also said she hopes to discuss how to build partnerships with other agencies and businesses as well in the community.

When asked about what issues occupy her now, Portanova said her agency is par-



ticularly concerned with the growing number of elderly it serves (see related Young Adults story on Page 12).

"That's our fastest growing population," she said. "Unfortunately, the funding is not growing as fast as the population."

Finger Lakes

In addition to its main office in Geneva, Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes also has an Auburn office that opened in 1998 with the financial support of local parishes.

Among its services, CCFL operates the Older Worker Employment Program, which helps clients 55 and older with job-readiness training and placement; the Geneva Community Lunch Program, which served more than 20,000 meals in 1997; and a parish social-ministry education and training program that has helped parishes establish social ministry committees and educated Catholics about the church's stance on land mines, farmworkers and the consistent life ethic.

One of the agency's newest efforts over the last year is a program called Crossroads. This uses community volunteers in Ontario County to act as mentors to single parents on welfare who want to enter the workplace, according to CCFL Executive Director Giovina Caroscio.

She added that another new initiative is a program called "Choose Wisely Now," which CCFL operates in partnership with a number of area agencies serving young people. CCFL's component is a sexual-abstinence education effort aimed at kids 10 to 14, she said, adding that funding for

the program derives from the New York State Department of Health.

Caroscio said she is looking forward to the upcoming CCUSA convention to learn how other Catholic Charities workers are finding private funding sources as government sources decrease, the implications of welfare reform, and the impact of managed care on the health and well-being of clients.

She added that, for her, Catholic Charities is an extension of the Gospel's call to justice, and that she is continually inspired by her staff and volunteers. Most of all, she said, she admires the patience of her agency's clients in the face of the odds against them.

"I think I would be a very angry person if I were in some of the situations of the people who come to our office in need," she said.

Southern Tier

Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier operates a host of programs including a food bank, and provides substance abuse counseling, teen pregnancy assistance and various welfare-to-work programs for its clients. The agency also boasts a domestic-violence program and residential support for people recovering from psychiatric illnesses.

In addition to its main office in Elmira, CCST has offices in Bath, Steuben County; Ithaca, Tompkins County; and Owego, Tioga County. The agency also plans to open an office within the next two years in Watkins Glen, Schuyler County.

Anthony Barbaro, CCST's head, said his agency planned to open a new joint venture with St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira on Sept. 24. Called St. Joseph's Samaritan Center, the venture will offer drop-in health care to people with no medical insurance. It will operate out of a center from which CCST currently offers thousands of people food, clothing and financial assistance.

Barbaro said that the new combined program grew out of the realization by the hospital and his agency that they had

common goals — insuring the health and well-being of low-income people. He added that Catholic hospitals and Catholic Charities need to collaborate more in the future.

"They're sort of on the same train in separate cars going to the same place not knowing they're both passengers," he said.

Barbaro added that his agency also plans to expand a program called Public Assistance Volunteer Effort with a \$75,000 state grant in the next year. PAVE will expand its mentoring program, which matches community volunteers with individuals trying to get off public assistance and into work, he said.

"This is the direction the government is going, and this is the direction we're going in," he said of such welfare-to-work programs.

Livingston County

Mount Morris is home to the headquarters of Catholic Charities of Livingston County. Opened in 1996, LCCC is the diocese's newest regional Catholic Charities agency and was founded in recognition of the need to expand Catholic Charities' work in rural areas, according to Tim McMahon, LCCC's executive director.

"Because we're not in an urban area, we're dealing with a lot more people who are isolated," he said.

He added that a lack of transportation is one of the key reasons the poor cannot obtain access to services and jobs in the country. To that end, in cooperation with Livingston County's Board of Cooperative Educational Services, LCCC last year began offering a program that awards a donated car to people on public assistance who complete 20 weeks of adult education and are placed in a job. So far, the program has helped three individuals, he said.

LCCC also offers a program that matches adult mentors with young people, as well as programs to reach Hispanics in the county. The agency also works with area parishes to collect school supplies for children from poor families each fall, and LCCC also provides food, clothing and housing services.

Motivation

All the Catholic Charities' directors said they will continue to be motivated by the church's teachings to reach the poor.

"It's an opportunity to live out what we are called to do by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that's to love our neighbor as ourselves," Balinsky said.

Charity to all

Diocesan Catholic Charities comprises a vast array of programs and services. In addition to regional agencies, the following offices and programs serve all 12 diocesan counties:

- A life issues office that promotes the church's consistent life ethic, which opposes abortion, poverty, war, euthanasia and the death penalty.

- An education and advocacy communications office, which promotes such programs as Catholic Relief Services (the U.S. bishops' overseas relief agency) and oversees the diocesan Public Policy Committee, which advances various federal, state and local legislative goals.

- A social-justice awareness office, which promotes within parishes the church's social teachings on life issues.

Affiliated agencies of Diocesan Catholic Charities are:

- Camp Stella Maris, a Catholic family camp in Livonia;

- Kinship Family & Youth Services Inc., which operates group homes and foster homes, and provides various services for children and alcoholism recovery support in Steuben and Yates counties.

- The Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, a joint effort of the Catholic and Episcopal dioceses of Rochester, which provides housing assistance to low and moderate-income families.

- Providence Housing Development Corp., which develops and manages affordable housing for families, the elderly and people with various disabilities and addictions.

- The Worker Ownership Resource Center, an economic-development organization that helps people start their own businesses and advocates for economic justice in public policy.

Church's social mission has deep U.S. roots

Catholic Charities USA's roots run deep in the country's history.

Catholic missionaries and religious orders provided charitable care for sick, widowed and orphaned settlers both before and after the founding of the United States. In the 19th century, parishes provided neighborhood services, and religious orders established free schools, orphanages, and institutions providing child care and services for the aging.

In 1910, a group of U.S. Catholic social-service providers, motivated by a

need to bring about a sense of national solidarity, convened the first National Conference of Catholic Charities. This conference eventually became Catholic Charities USA.

By 1922, there were 35 Catholic Charities bureaus across the nation. That number has grown to more than 1,400 agencies, institutions and organizations today.

Catholic Charities USA is currently finishing up a three-year planning/renewal process called Vision 2000. Among oth-

er goals, the process called for Catholic Charities to concentrate on empowering the poor through community organizing, economic development and political advocacy.

"As Catholic Charities USA heads toward a new century ...," its official history reads, "its purpose remains constant: to reduce poverty, support families, and build communities."

Compiled from Catholic Charities USA's Web site at <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/who/history.html>.

Painting

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the museum if it went ahead with the exhibition, which director Arnold L. Lehman said it was determined to do.

"You don't have a right to government funding for desecrating somebody else's religion," Giuliani said.

The next day, the mayor said the museum was violating the terms of its lease because it announced that children under 17 would not be admitted to the exhibition, titled "Sensation," unless accompanied by an adult.

Bishop Daily issued a statement Sept. 23 expressing support for a boycott and stating that he would support a denial of public funds for the exhibition.

"I am sad and disappointed that the Brooklyn Museum has lowered its standards by offering this exhibit," he said. "There does not appear to be anything redeeming about it."

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights also issued a statement Sept. 23 applauding Giuliani's stand regarding the exhibition, and calling on Hillary Rodham Clinton, widely expected to run against Giuliani next year for U.S. senator, to state her position.

Clinton later said she doesn't personally approve of the exhibit but said it would be wrong to take city funds away from the museum, which has a right to show it.

William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, said every member of the New York City Council had been sent a letter calling for defunding of the museum. He also said the league was asking all Catholic school teachers to boycott the museum during the current academic year.

Defenders of the museum accused Giuliani of interfering with artistic freedom and the First Amendment by his threats. But Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, editor of the Catholic lay magazine *Commonweal*,

said in an op-ed article in *The New York Times* Sept. 25 that First Amendment protection for Ofili's painting did not mean it was entitled to taxpayer support.

She said the museum director had a position of public trust and could be held responsible for how he used it. "Bringing 'Sensation' to the Brooklyn Museum of Art was bad judgment," she wrote. "If he tries to hide his bad judgment behind the First Amendment, he will not only violate that public trust, he will abuse it."

Cardinal O'Connor said "our national well-being" was at stake because the country depended on all groups showing respect for each other's religion.