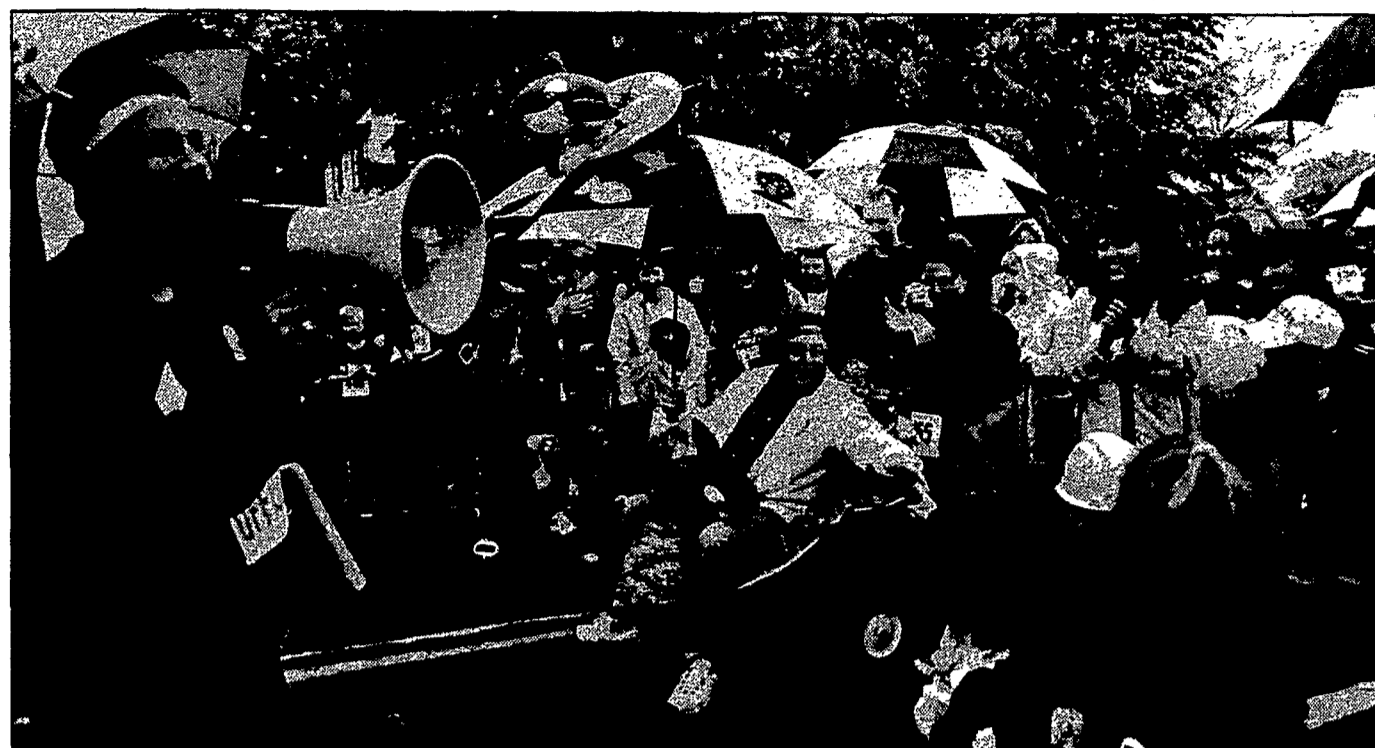


DIOCESAN NEWS



Karin von Voigtlander/Photo intern



Run for the young

(Above) Father P.J. Ryan (left), pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Hamlin, and Father John Gagnier, pastor of St. Dominic's Parish, Shortsville, in wheelbarrows, shake hands before the 1-mile Fun Run at the Run for the Young, beginning at St. Lawrence Church, Greece, May 12. Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator of youth ministry, acts as announcer. (At left, from left) Jason Knarr of Churchville, Jim May of Williamson and Heidi Swarts of Dansville bow heads during a prayer before the 5K run. Despite cool temperatures and showers, the fifth annual Run for the Young drew 400 participants and raised \$12,000 for the diocese's Youth Scholarship Fund. Swarts set a women's division record of 17:21.

Closing

Continued from page 1

The hospital was all but empty, save for two patients in its emergency room, according to a hospital official. A cancer center on-site will operate until the end of July. New York state's health department has yet to officially approve the closing, and the department has announced plans to monitor ViaHealth's financial practices to make sure the same fate does not befall Rochester General. According to published reports, state health officials are exploring why Genesee did not inform state officials about its problem before it announced the closing.

GRCC also had plans to organize people to speak out against the closing at a meeting of the Rochester City Council May 15. Additionally, the organization is asking local Democrats to speak to Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton about the closing when she comes to Rochester for a party dinner on Saturday, May 19.

Meanwhile, the Downtown Community Forum at St. Mary's Church, 15 St. Mary's Place, will host a program to address the topic "Lessons from Genesee Hospital: What Should Our Community Health Care Values Be?" on Wednesday, May 30,

from 5:30-7 p.m. Free and open to the public, the forum will feature local health-care experts who will discuss both the current state of the health-care system locally as well as its possible future. Information is available by calling 716/232-7168.

The acquisition of Genesee's facilities have been reportedly discussed by the area's other two major health systems, StrongHealth, which includes Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital, as well as Unity Health System, which includes Park Ridge Health System in Greece and the former St. Mary's Hospital in the city, now known as the Genesee Street Campus. The former St. Mary's is currently home to an array of community services, senior services and skilled nursing beds as well as a 24-hour primary care walk-in center.

St. Mary's and Park Ridge hospitals had formed an alliance in 1997, under the name Unity Health System. By late 1999 the Daughters of Charity, founders of St. Mary's in 1857, had decided to withdraw their sponsorship. The Daughters of Charity national health system agreed to forgive half of the \$66 million Unity owed it. The sisters previously had committed \$40 million at the time of the alliance.

Colleen Phillips, media relations manager for Unity, said the Unity board voted May 7 to look at acquiring part of the Genesee Hospital campus. In particular, she said, the health system is interested in possibly converting Genesee Hospital into an ambulatory and non-acute care facility on the model of the Genesee Street Campus. Once plagued with massive financial

problems, Unity has just finished its first year in the black after several years of financial losses. Unity won't acquire any part of Genesee if it looks like such a move could hurt its current fiscal health, she said.

One observer concerned about the loss of Genesee is Sister Christine Wagner, SSJ, executive director of St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, which is less than a mile south of the hospital. Among its array of social services, the center provides free primary medical care and counseling to about 2,500 people a year. Many are working people who can't afford health insurance, but make too much money to qualify for Medicaid, the federally funded health insurance program for the poor.

Sister Wagner pointed out that St. Joseph's — which is sponsored by her order, the Sisters of St. Joseph — has seen a noticeable increase in request for mental health care since the Genesee closing was announced. Prior to the announcement, she said, the center averaged 10-12 requests for mental health services a week, whereas now that number is between 12 and 15.

"You multiply that out over a year, that's quite a few people," she said.

However, Sister Wagner saw a silver lining in the hospital closing's dark cloud. The closing has ignited a lively community debate about current trends in health care, one that the religious community has joined vigorously.

"The religious community has been maybe a little too quiet in this discussion," Sister Wagner said.

Clarification

A story in last week's issue incorrectly characterized Father John Steger's continuing tenure as pastor of St. Jude's Church, Gates, past his 75th birthday, as having been "permitted" by Bishop Matthew H. Clark. Although canon law "requests" that a pastor submit his resignation to the bishop at age 75, Father Steger declined to do so. (Our story incor-

rectly stated this request as a "requirement.") If a pastor submits his resignation, canon law states that the diocesan bishop may accept or decline the resignation. If a pastor does not resign as requested, however, canon law does not call for any action by the diocesan bishop, unless he finds it necessary to initiate a formal process of removal against the pastor.

We regret the confusion.

Memphis firm designated for Sacred Heart

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A Tennessee firm will serve as architect for the Sacred Heart Cathedral renovation, due to take place in 2003 and 2004.

James F. Williamson, partner at Williamson and Pounders Architects in Memphis, was secured in mid-March as chief architect. His hiring was publicly announced during a visit to Rochester May 8-9.

Father John Mulligan, pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral and a diocesan vicar general, said Williamson was selected from among two national and two local firms. The selection was made by parish and diocesan officials, as well as members of the renovation committee.

Williamson took his first thorough look at Sacred Heart May 8, and came away impressed with the 75-year-old structure.

"Architecturally, it's a splendid building," Williamson said. "It's in remarkably good shape. There's a great deal we need to preserve and enhance. People needn't worry; my practice started out as a historical preservation practice. So I'm very sensitive to that."

According to Williamson, Arthur Yeates of Williamson and Pounders will serve as project manager, overseeing day-to-day progress once construction begins. However, Williamson emphasized, the project is in too early a stage to pinpoint what the renovation will actually involve.

"We're just beginning to get a handle on the scope. At this point we're mostly listening," Williamson said.

Father Mulligan said he's impressed by Williamson's experience with church buildings. Williamson currently serves as architect for the restoration of Memphis' Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, a project that is currently in its second phase. Williamson has served as architect for numerous church projects for other denominations as well.

"The firm focuses very carefully on restoration, and they'd be very strong in preserving the integrity of the cathedral building," Father Mulligan said. "He also has a lot of respect for the function of the cathedral."

While in Rochester, Williamson also took part in interviews for an on-site local architect. As of press time, the on-site firm had not yet been hired.

Williamson and Yeates were introduced May 8 during a series of public informational sessions given by Father Richard Vosko, the project's architectural design consultant. The sessions took place May 7-9 at Nazareth Academy. Father Mulligan estimated that an average of nearly 200 people attended each session.

"We certainly were very pleased with him," Father Mulligan said of Father Vosko's talks. "A number of people said they were looking at (the renovation) in a very, very different way."

Father Mulligan said a specific outline, encompassing all proposed aspects of the Sacred Heart renovation, is due by early 2002. In the meantime, the Sacred Heart pastor added, the renovation committee is considering creation of a Web site to address questions submitted by the audience during Father Vosko's May 7-9 talks.

Father Peter Clifford, renovation committee member, noted that Father Vosko will return to the Rochester Diocese Oct. 15-16, appearing in Geneva and Elmira, to give condensed versions of his May presentations. Father Clifford, pastor of St. Michael's Church in Newark, said the appearances will serve as a chance "for the whole diocesan community to meet Father Vosko."

Recognizing

Toni Palumbo, a fourth grader at St. John the Evangelist School, Greece, was honored by the Child's Play Touring Company at Nazareth College Feb. 16 for writing the poem "Why?" Toni's poem was selected from 200 entries submitted by students from local schools. Receiving honorable mention for their poems were St. John students Tyler Surdi, Colleen Keenan, Marissa Gionta, Daniel Quinn, Andra Brown, Eric Ruffino and Kevin Richard. Child's Play is a not-for-profit theatre troupe dedicated to dramatizing stories and poems written by young people.