

DIOCESAN NEWS



Courtesy of Providence Housing Development Corp.

Housing plan eyes Pastoral Center

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

GATES — Construction of apartments for adults with special needs may begin within weeks on the campus of the diocesan Pastoral Center.

Providence Housing Development Corp. is awaiting final approval from the Gates Town Board as well as from diocesan officials, said Maggie Bringewatt, executive director of Providence Housing. Bringewatt hopes for groundbreaking to take place by Nov. 1 and for the apartments to be available for occupancy by June 2003.

The single-level complex would be known as St. Andrew's Apartments and be located on the southwest corner of the 23-acre Pastoral Center campus, located at 1150 Buffalo Road. It would consist of 12 one- and two-bedroom apartments for low-income adults who are physically challenged and/or developmentally disabled. The Community Services program of

diocesan Catholic Charities would be the project's chief service provider.

All the units would be handicapped accessible and include such features as wide doors and hallways for wheelchairs, and specially equipped bathroom facilities.

Funding is being arranged through Providence Housing, a non-profit agency of diocesan Catholic Charities. Bringewatt said most of the apartments' estimated \$2 million cost would be covered by the New York state Division of Housing and Community Renewal. In addition to providing a \$743,000 grant, the state program has secured investors via tax credits that would generate more than \$1 million. Other funds would include \$100,000 from Monroe County and \$53,822 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's privately funded Affordable Housing Program.

Bringewatt also noted that the land owners — in this case, the Diocese of Rochester — would aid the project by selling the property to the investors for a

nominal sum.

Two buildings currently sit on the Pastoral Center campus: the Pastoral Center itself, a brick structure built in 1950 as the former St. Andrew's Seminary, and St. William House, a wood structure built in 1936 in front of the Pastoral Center along Buffalo Road. The main building currently houses numerous diocesan offices; St. William House is home to Providence Housing and the *Catholic Courier*.

Bringewatt said constructing the apartments adjacent to diocesan headquarters is "a great testament, in a way, to what we hear about our social-justice and social-ministry concerns. This makes it real."

The apartments would be built between St. William House and the neighboring Eagles Club, with a residential area to the immediate northwest. Bringewatt said neighbors initially had questions about this initiative, but that "when they understood a little more about the project and who it was for, I think people were pretty open-minded."

Elmira parish to become Ss. Peter and Paul

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

The title Eastside Catholic Parish, adopted in 1990 when a three-church cluster was formed in Elmira, is in the process of being changed to Ss. Peter and Paul Parish — the same name as the cluster's only remaining church.

Eastside is a 900-family faith community. The other two churches in the cluster, St. John the Baptist and St. Cecilia, closed in 1998.

Yet the parish has continued maintaining three separate accounts for collections, bequests and other financial matters. Father Daniel Condon, diocesan chancellor, explained that St. Cecilia and

St. John the Baptist are still considered parishes, and are seeking to suppress themselves by merging with Ss. Peter and Paul. These moves would allow collections, bequests and the like to be pooled into one account.

"It will immensely ease the bookwork," said Father Patrick Connor, pastor of Eastside Catholic Parish since 1992.

Since parishes are both canonical and civil corporations, requests for suppressions and mergers must be approved by diocesan officials as well as civil courts. Father Condon said he expects the process to be completed in less than two months, and that there is no reason to believe the request won't be honored.

To acknowledge this development, Fa-

ther Connor had suggested this spring that the community change its name — but found that such a move can be a sensitive issue. The pastor had proposed Holy Martyrs as the new parish name because the saints Peter, Paul, John the Baptist and Cecilia were all martyrs. As was the intent with Eastside Catholic Parish, the title Holy Martyrs would have acknowledged all three original parishes.

But, Father Connor said, the proposal raised concern among parishioners. Michael Gehl, parish pastoral council president, explained that the word "martyrs" has a negative connotation, and that it would be awkward to identify the parish by a name that differs from the name of its church building. Canon law does not allow for a church to be renamed.

So Father Connor took a poll of parishioners, offering as final choices the names Holy Martyrs and Ss. Peter and Paul. He said "the overwhelming majority" favored Ss. Peter and Paul.

Gehl observed that former members of St. Cecilia and St. John the Baptist apparently don't object.

"I think the beauty of time helped that. If we were to change the name (to Ss. Peter and Paul) the week after we closed, it would be much more of a hot topic," said Gehl, who formerly attended both St. John the Baptist and St. Cecilia.

The first merging of churches in eastern Elmira occurred in 1982, when St. Cecilia and St. John the Baptist started being served by a single pastoral team.

Eight years later those two parishes combined with Ss. Peter and Paul, creating the three-church cluster that was dubbed Eastside Catholic Parish.

CCFL to mark 20th anniversary

Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes will celebrate its 20th year of operation with a dinner Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 6 p.m. at Club 86 in Geneva.

Jesuit Father J. Bryan Hehir, president of Catholic Charities USA, will give the dinner's keynote address. Father Hehir is a well-known theologian, author, professor and expert on Catholic social teaching. He was the first Catholic to head Harvard Divinity School, the position he held prior to taking up his current post, and he has also held a number of high-level positions with the United States Catholic Conference.

At the dinner, the Matthew H. Clark Award, named for Bishop Clark, will be presented to Deacon Thomas K. Cass and his wife, Jean, in recognition of their service to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester. Deacon Cass serves Good Shepherd Catholic Community in Aurora, a six-church parish in Cayuga County. He also served from 1993-2000 on the board of directors of Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, and was its chairman from 1999-2000. Deacon Cass also served as diocesan director of deacon personnel from 1997-2000, and as a member of the board of Diocesan Catholic Charities from 1995-2000.

Jean S. Cass, a nurse and community vol-

unteer, co-founded Clifton Springs' House of John, a home for the dying. She was co-director of the facility from 1992-2000.

Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes was founded as the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry in 1982, and changed to its current name in 1998. Giovina Carosco has been the organizations' executive director since it was founded. The human-services agency provides a variety of services to clients in Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties. Its main office is located at 301 Franklin Square in Geneva, and its satellite office is located at 33 William St. in Auburn.

"Looking back on these past 20 years, I am proud that we as an agency have been able to make a difference in so many people's lives," Carosco said. "It is important to remember that none of our accomplishments could have happened without the support of staff, volunteers, church and community partners, and financial supporters. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to work with such dedicated people every day."

For information on Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, or to purchase tickets to the dinner, call the Geneva office at 315/789-2686, or the Auburn office at 315/252-0018.

School gets new principal

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Stephen P. Miskell, a veteran educator and administrator who attends St. Mary's Church in Geneseo, is the new principal of St. Joseph's School in Auburn, which serves students in pre-kindergarten to eighth grade.

As principal, Miskell succeeds Mary E. Caffrey, who led St. Joseph's for four years. On Sept. 3, she became assistant principal for academic affairs, a newly created position, at DeSales High School in Geneva.

Miskell, whose appointment by the Diocese of Rochester became effective Aug. 29, has worked in several Catholic and public schools. He said he wanted to oversee St. Joseph's because he liked the potential a Catholic school offers for shaping students.

"I think it was the opportunity to work with the whole child and attend to the physical and academic growth as well as the spiritual growth that we can have here at St. Joseph's," he said of his return to Catholic education.

Miskell most recently served as assistant high school principal and director of physical education and health at York Center School District in Retsof. He also served as principal of West Middle School, Auburn, from 1999-2001; Groton Middle School, Groton, from 1998-99; and Our Lady of Pompeii School, Syracuse, from 1996-98.

Miskell also was an assistant professor of economics at Finger Lakes Community College in Hopewell from 1991-96; adjunct professor of business at Cayuga Community College, Auburn, from 1990-95; junior-high science teacher at St. Thomas the Apostle School, Irondequoit, from 1981-82; physical education teacher at Soule Road Middle School, Liverpool (near Syracuse), from 1980-81; and vice principal and junior-high science teacher at St. Patrick's School, Seneca Falls, from 1978-80. While at St. Patrick's, he also coached volleyball and soccer.

Miskell said he has begun meeting with a parent advisory committee at St. Joseph's to discuss creating a five-year plan to improve the school, raise academic standards and increase enrollment, which currently stands at 336 students.

"Right now we feel that St. Joseph's is the best-kept secret in Auburn, and in five years we feel that it will be the envy of all the elementary schools in Auburn," he said.

In a diocesan statement, Dominican Sister Elizabeth Meegan, diocesan superintendent of schools, said she welcomed Miskell's appointment.

"We're very pleased to have Stephen return to our Catholic schools family to serve the parents and staff at St. Joseph's School," she said. "The wealth of knowledge and experience that Stephen brings to his position will complement the excellent program St. Joseph's offers."

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