Mercy High School unveils addition

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

BRIGHTON — Beginning in early September, students at Our Lady of Mercy High School will enjoy the most extensive expansion in Mercy's 75-year history.

An addition to the high school building features a new gymnasium and other athletic facilities; entranceway and atrium; library; and upgrade of computer and science technology.

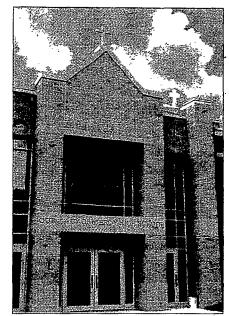
"The last new building was put up in the 1940s ... we needed to enhance and improve," said Mercy Sister Carol Wulforst, school president.

The addition was constructed on the eastern end of the Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road. The school's new entrance faces Clover Street and is marked by a wide doorway.

The spacious gymnasium features three regulation-sized basketball courts. Virginia Segerson Lenyk, the school's director of major gifts/marketing, said the gym's seating capacity of 850 — more than four times the capacity of the existing gym — will benefit the school's traditionally strong varsity basketball program. Lenyk also noted that the new gym's

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Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courie

An addition built at Brighton's Our Lady of Mercy High School includes a new entranceway.

high ceiling meets Section 5 regulations for volleyball, and that the overall extra gym space will allow more students to take part in sports. Next to this facility are a new fitness room and locker room.

Education

"Mercy must recognize the surge in women's athletics," Sister Wulforst stated.

Outside the gym is a spacious atrium known as the Catherine McAuley Gallery, named in honor of the founder of the Sisters of Mercy. The gallery will host drama and choral productions, lectures and other special events. It also will serve as a commons area for students and a place to display artwork.

Other notable elements of the gallery are an elaborate stairway leading up to the high school's auditorium, and the Catherine McAuley Wall of Honor, on which plaques will be displayed to honor women who have made outstanding contributions and achievements involving Mercy.

Further into the school's addition is a new library/media center, which has been equipped with state-of-the-art technology as part of an overall effort to upgrade the school's science and computer programs.

The expansion also includes a new board room next to the library, as well as an elevator and ramp offering improved access to the school for the handicapped.

Groundbreaking began in September 2002, with two Rochester-area firms — Sear-Brown Associates as architect and LeChase Construction Services LLC as construction manager — guiding the project. The addition is being financed through an \$8 million capital campaign being conducted in conjunction with the school's 75th anniversary. Campaign co-chairs are James and Janice Maxwell, and Thomas and Erin Roth.

According to Gary Rigoni, volunteer campaign manager, nearly \$7 million has been raised since the campaign begin in 1998. Proceeds from the campaign are being allocated as follows: \$5 million for the new building; \$1 million for science and technology upgrades; \$1.5 million toward an endowment fund for students with financial needs; and \$500,000 for campaign expenses.

Rigoni said the entire addition will be ready for use at the start of the 2003-04 school year, when an estimated 620 students will fill classrooms in grades 7-12.

"It's absolutely beautiful," Rigoni said. "We can't wait for school to open so all the kids can see this thing."

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