# ENVIRONMENTAL

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Association, Catholic Health Initiatives, National Council of Catholic Women, National Catholic Educational Association, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Conference for Catholic Facility Management, National Catholic Partnership for Disabilities and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Each coalition member also has taken steps individually to prevent environmental harm to children's health. Catholic Charities USA, for example, trained housing coordinators from 50 dioceses on environmental-health issues related to housing.

In the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y., Catholic Charities members are working on environmental-health issues involving power-plant emissions, toxic-waste sites and lead poisoning, according to Kathy Dubel, director of justice and peace ministry for Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier.

Dubel said that power-plant emissions, for example, can contain nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and mercury and can trigger asthma attacks in children. Catholic Charities has been involved in a statewide advocacy network asking Gov. George Pataki to reduce in-state power-plant emissions to protect health.

Catholic Charities is also teaming up with Elmira's Holy Family Catholic schools to cosponsor a free program Oct. 3, which will focus on children's health and the environment. It will take place from 7-9 p.m. at 215 E. Church St., Elmira. Presenters include Elaine Caso, master gardener for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County; Gary Sokolowski, housing rehabilitation specialist for the City of Elmira; and Deb Delaney, nurse manager for Southern Tier Pediatrics.

**As Catholic schools and other church organizations update their computer technology, they search for ways to dispose of outdated models safely.**

The Catholic Health Association also has joined in Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, an initiative of the American Hospital Association, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Nurses Association and other health-care groups.

## LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Meanwhile, Catholic hospitals are continuing to work for environmental stewardship through measures that range from converting to energy-efficient vehicles and heating and air-conditioning systems, to switching to reusable dishes in the cafeteria.

Many Catholic health-care facilities have created extensive donation programs for the equipment and materials they no longer need. Medical equipment, televisions, beds, and office equipment and furniture go to community groups, overseas missions, schools and charitable organizations.

St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira will often trade in used medical equipment to its original vendor in return for a discount on new equipment.

"The vendors encourage that, and it's a win for us," said Denis Sweeney, director of St. Joseph's marketing/community development.

Sweeney said that when computers have to be disposed of, any parts that are still good will be kept and used for repairing other machines in the future. Patient information is always erased from computers and other equipment before it is disposed of, he added.

St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell recently offered to sell its older computers to employees. Although the computers are no longer capable of doing the work required by the hospital, "they could be used for home word processing and connecting to the Internet," said Pamela Caskey, assistant director of information systems for the hospital. Patient and hospital information is also cleared from these computers before they are offered for sale.

When disposing of old computers, diocesan schools, parishes and Pastoral Center offices use the services of Regional Computer Recycling and Recovery. For a fee, this company will pick up and dispose of computers or other electronic office equipment. According to Charlie McKernan, the company's client-services director, Regional Computer Recycling and Recovery will sort out equipment that may still be usable.

"We'll take what good equipment that we take in and funnel it through to charities," McKernan said. "If the equipment is more than three or four years old, it's not going to do a charity a lot of good."

Workers then take apart the obsolete computers. Each different material, such as leaded glass or plastic, is funneled into its own materials stream, and all the materials will eventually be reused.

"It's against the law for this stuff to end up in a Dumpster or a landfill. We have a zero landfill policy here," McKernan said.

Several of the Catholic schools in the diocese have occasionally donated or sold computers to children and families, but that is rare and done on a case-by-case basis, according to Tom Veeder, network administrator and PC coordinator for the Diocese of Rochester.

"By the time our schools get rid of them, they're hardly worth a penny," Veeder said.

Contains reporting by Jennifer Burke in Rochester.


## GENERAL

### Announcements

**ADOPTIONS:** The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 585-529-9530. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

## VOCATIONS

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