St Margaret's House Report

Just one year ago at the 2001 Diocesan Convention I reported that the St. Margaret's House Board and St. James Cathedral Chapter, together with the City of South Bend and architects Troyer & Associates, were working on plans for the renovation/expansion of the space we occupy in the Petersen Building.

During 2001-2002, we commenced a Capital Campaign, the results of which, to date, are making it possible for construction to begin on Phase I of the proposed renovation. We at St. Margaret's House are pleased to announce that groundbreaking took place on September 18, and we are now on our way!

Phase I is scheduled for completion on or about December 31, 2002. The initial changes will make the entire building (three floors and basement) handicapped accessible and otherwise in compliance with all state and local building and fire codes. We will be able to begin shifting certain programs and office functions to the second floor, thus relieving the crowded conditions we often experience at present. Individual counseling, small group meetings, art projects, children's activities and an expanded clothes closet are scheduled for this space. The first floor, the "original St. Margaret's House" will contain an expanded kitchen, dining area, children's area and laundry, still among the most basic services that bring guests through our doors.

The additional space will be very welcome. Our records show that during August, 2002 1,459 guests made use of one or more of our services, working out to an average of 66 persons each day! Many of these are regular members of the St. Margaret's House community, who come in not only for meals and other material benefits, but to socialize and participate in various programs and support groups. Nearly every day, however, we welcome new guests, sometimes up to 20 in a week. We are gratified that women who need our services are learning of our existence, either through the media or by word of mouth.

During the renovation period, we plan to keep St. Margaret's open and maintain, as much as possible, our schedule of fall activities. The annual Women's Christmas luncheon is scheduled for December 17 in the Cathedral undercroft. We also plan to open our Christmas Shop at which women can select gifts for themselves and their children.

Once more we thank you, the churches and individuals throughout the Diocese, who amaze us with support at all levels. Again we ask you to keep St. Margaret's House in your prayers as we go forward with the expansion project that we have undertaken.

Kathryn Schneider, Director