Through the Years

St. E’s Beginnings Called ‘Humble’

In September, 1911, the Catholic Woman’s League of Rockford, under the direction and supervision of the Rt. Rev. Peter J. Muldoon, D. D., established a social center at the corner of Kent and Ferguson Streets, with the Misses Alice Walsh and Margaret Nolan in charge. Its purpose was to carry on social work among those of foreign extraction in the city.

In December, 1911, the temporary home of the center had to be abandoned, and the Woodman Hall on South Main Street was secured for Saturday afternoons until June. The first entertainment given at the center was held at this hall at Christmas, 1911. A program was arranged and a Christmas tree bending low with gifts for the little ones, was provided. The gifts came from Rockford friends and from the Daughters of Our Lady of Chicago, and they were passed to the children by the Rev. J. J. Flanagan, who acted the part of “St. Nick” from the Arctic region.

The center, humble in its beginning, started with but five pupils, soon had an enrollment of 55. A successful season was closed in June at Woodman Hall. During the summer months, outings were given the children at frequent intervals.

The ... League decided to establish a home where social service could be carried forward on a larger scale. Consequently, the property at 1505 South Main Street was purchased, and became the permanent home of what was to be called St. Elizabeth’s Social Center. The house was repaired, renovated and furnished, and the little class of 55 Italian children of the previous year was soon happily coming to the new home and bringing others to join the various classes, under the supervision of volunteer workers.

— 1924 History of the Rockford Diocese

Thank you St. Elizabeth, keep up the great work!

— The Lorden Family —

Catholic Women’s League

One hundred years ago, Bishop Peter J. Muldoon asked the Catholic Women’s League to establish St. Elizabeth Center to help the immigrants new to the area.

As you celebrate One Hundred Years of service, we congratulate you and extend our prayers and best wishes.

Catholic Women’s League of Rockford P.O. Box 1854 Rockford, IL 61110-0354

Thank You St. Elizabeth for 100 Years of Service.

Proclamation

WHEREAS, St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center has helped the Citizens of Rockford in many ways throughout its 101 years of service; and

WHEREAS, St. Elizabeth partners with the City of Rockford, other units of local government, and the United Way to help children attend school and enrichment programs; provide counseling and advocacy services for those in need; teach English to immigrants and refugees; offer GED services to those seeking to further their education; extend recreational opportunities to community members; provide meaningful field and cultural trips for children to area attractions; and organize residents to become volunteers for the benefit of our community; and

WHEREAS, St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center continues its service by providing meals through its soup kitchen and food pantry, clothing through its clothes closet, and emergency relief services; and

WHEREAS, St. Elizabeth will celebrate the diversity of its staff, volunteers, clients and services on September 29, 2012, with a neighborhood picnic at its South Main Street locations;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LAWRENCE J. MORRISSEY, as Mayor of the city of Rockford do hereby proclaim Saturday, September 29, 2012 to be:

“St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center Day” in Rockford, Illinois, and urge all citizens to recognize St. Elizabeth’s Celebration of 101 Years of Service to the Rockford community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the city of Rockford to be affixed this 24th day of September 2012.

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
City of Rockford

St. E’s Center Celebrates Past as It Moves into Second Century

Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey (left) declares Sept. 29 St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center Day in Rockford at the Sept. 24 city council meeting. Attending to accept the proclamation are Karen Carlson, center director, and Patrick Winn, executive director of Catholic Charities.
The Bachrodt Family, on behalf of our father, Lou Bachrodt, Jr. (5/8/18 to 4/13/07), wishes to congratulate St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center on their One Hundred Year Anniversary. Our father served on the St. Elizabeth’s Board for over 50 years and was the building chairman for their facilities. Dad always held a soft spot in his heart for St. Elizabeth’s and we’re sure he’s sending his Congratulations and Gratitude, along with us, for the wonderful work done in the community by the St. Elizabeth staff for the past 100 years.

Lou Bachrodt III, Dick Bachrodt, Pat Bachrodt, Mary Costello
Neighborhood youngsters join Rockford musician Carl Cole (at organ) on stage during the Sept. 29 anniversary festivities at St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center in Rockford. Cole conducts a music class at the center.

Malachi Murphy, 4, sits still as St. E's volunteer Susie Derry paints his face. Both Derry and her daughter, Boylan Central Catholic High School senior Molly Derry, helped paint faces and arms. 

ON PAGE 1: The Leal children, Urnavi, 5; Armando, 4; Mario, 7, and Marissa, 10, hold out their arms to show off their names. Molly Derry painted them at the St. E's celebration, Sept. 29.

Juanita Hernandez and Jose Luis dance to the music of Guitarras de Oro. The singer-musicians are Manuel Huerta (left) and David Baeza.

St. E's Celebrates with Neighborhood Picnic

Volunteers (from left) Carol Buckwalter and JoAnn Lewis, both St. Rita Parish members, and Cathy Weightman-Moore of Catholic Charities serve up lunches as Rockford resident Teresa Walters eyes the offerings.

Through the Years

Sisters Arrive, CWL Buys House

Bishop Muldoon, in 1921, invited the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity to take over operation of the agency. Since 1921, the sisters have assisted thousands in need, both materially and spiritually.

In 1945, the Catholic Woman's League members purchased a nine room house and a large lot adjacent to the property, thereby greatly increasing the services which could be offered.

— 1958 History of the Rockford Diocese

Distant peoples stand in awe of your marvels; east and west you make resound with joy. Psalm 65:8

We applaud your 100 years of service and witness. Congratulations and thank you!
First Members Inducted to Father Edgar’s Wall of Fame

The volunteers we are honoring today have a real heart for service, like Father Edgar.

— Karen Carlson, director, St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center

Through the Years

Father Edgar Smigiel, OFM (center), long-time director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center, poses on the site of the new St. E’s building with State Rep. Edolo J. “Zeke” Giorgi (left) and Lou Bachrodt, Jr. Both Giorgi and Bachrodt were instrumental in paving the way and obtaining funding for construction of the building on the east side of South Main Street in Rockford. Groundbreaking for the building was Aug. 24, 1990. The center’s new Wall of Fame is named for Father Smigiel.

Franciscan Friars Assist at St. E’s

In August 1973, the Franciscan Friars of the Assumption Province assumed the administration of the center at the invitation of Bishop O’Neill. The services rendered from the center to people of all ages, religious backgrounds and ethnic origins are as follows: outreach programs, counseling and Guidance Programs, social growth and development, Social Redirection and parent child care programs. Its purpose was to carry on social work among those of foreign extraction in the city.

— 1976 History of the Rockford Diocese

Father Neal Kamiński, OFM, former director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center, emceed an open house at the center, Nov. 17, 1973.

Accepting honors for the first inductees to Father Edgar’s Wall of Fame at St. Elizabeth Catholic Community Center, Sept. 29, were (from left) Erin Laemmrich and Russell Bambino III for the late Russell Bambino, Jr. (top right), Peggy Powers for the late Cille Arnold (bottom right), and honorees Lupe Garza and Hallie Williams. Center director Karen Carlson presented plaques and described the services of each of the volunteers who have helped the center for decades. Portraits of each honoree will be mounted in a hallway of the St. E’s east building on South Main Street in Rockford.

Buon Centesimo Anniversario! (Happy 100th)

Thank you for continuing the work of Christ in our neighborhood.

From The Conventual Franciscan Friars and parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Rockford.

Congratulations St. Elizabeth on 100 years of dedicated service.

A Healthier Day in Northern Illinois

Our extensive network of primary care physicians and medical specialists make it easy for area residents to access quality care.

And our close partnerships with specialty care centers—like Illinois Neurological Institute and the Joslin Diabetes Center—as well as help us offer our patients the best care available in northern Illinois. All Together Better.

Learn more about how we’re bringing the best care to northern Illinois. AHealthierDay.org