

A welcome addition

Local residents were greeted with the news recently that All Saints Regional Catholic School plans to build a new kindergarten through grade six facility on Doc Cramer Boulevard in Manahawkin.

Taxpayers who have been footing the bill for new public schools as well as additions to existing schools in Lacey, Stafford, Barnegat and other towns throughout southern Ocean County should be shouting "Hooray!" or perhaps in this case "Hallelujah!"

As the residential building boom continues, so does the need for new classroom space, teachers for those classrooms, support staff, books and supplies and so on and so on...all funded by tax dollars.

Imagine a new school in the area which will hopefully educate local students up to eighth grade (if Sister Jeanette M. Daily's prayers are answered, and we're sure they will be), without taxpayers paying the freight. What a blessing!

The Diocese of Trenton and the parishes of St. Pius X, St. Theresa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Mary and St. Francis of Assisi will be funding the \$4.9 million project.

The current All Saints kindergarten through grade four school has been functioning in St. Mary's Parish Center in Manahawkin. That school along with the Lighthouse Christian Academy educate 415 pupils from this area.

All Saints School still needs approvals from the Stafford Township Planning Board but everyone involved with the project is hopeful that the approvals will be granted, and if all goes well, the new Catholic school will be ready to open in the fall of 2001.

That news along with the Lighthouse Academy's initial discussions being under way to expand to eighth grade, according to Principal Joyce Boyd Fort, should bring music to taxpayer's ears and relief to their strained pocketbooks.

Keeping the faith



STEVE SCHOLFIELD/Staff Photographer

● First-grader Stephens Gurdjian (left), kindergartner A.J. Sweeney and first-grader Ryan Ackerson talk with Sister Jeannette M. Daily, principal of the All Saints Catholic School in Stafford.

Diocese confident regional school will be built

By **ERIK LARSEN**
MANAHAWKIN BUREAU

STAFFORD — The Diocese of Trenton believes faith will triumph over bureaucratic machinery and that construction of a \$4.9 million campus for its All Saints Regional Catholic School will begin as soon as the Planning Board approves it, possibly this spring.

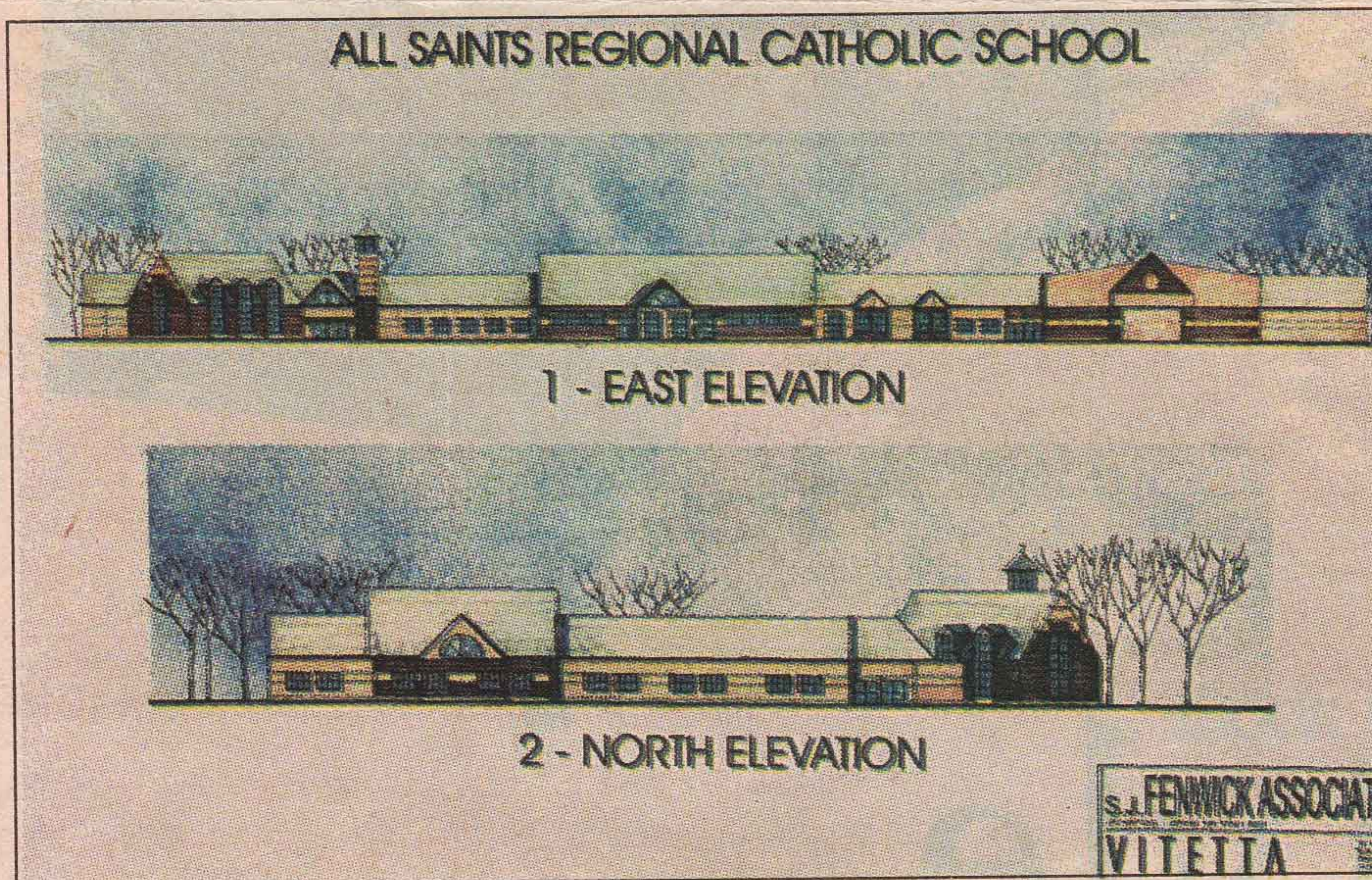
Sister Jeannette M. Daily of the Sisters of Joseph is the energetic and feisty founding principal of the kindergarten-through-fourth-grade parochial school, now located at St. Mary's Parish Center in the southeast corner of routes 9 and 72.

"They're pretty anxious for us to get going," Daily said. "(Stafford) can't build schools fast enough."

The school's current makeshift quarters at St. Mary's has eight classrooms, a gymnasium and a library. Daily converted existing classroom and office space in September 1997, with just 23 students enrolled.

The proposed facility on Doc Cramer Boulevard is expected to open in the fall of 2001 with grades kindergarten to six. The building will house 20 classrooms, two for each grade up to eighth grade with additional preschool facilities for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Daily explained that the plan is to



STEVE SCHOLFIELD/Staff Photographer

● Artist's rendering shows the proposed All Saints Regional Catholic School building the Diocese of Trenton wants to build in Stafford.

build the proposed school in phases as warranted by enrollment growth.

Phase One of the construction plan calls for a fine arts room, a media center, a chapel and a multipurpose room to serve as cafeteria, gymnasium and stage.

Although just about all of the \$4.9 million will be appropriated from the Trenton diocese and the surrounding parishes of St. Pius X in Lacey, St. Theresa's in Tuckerton, St. Francis of Assisi in Long Beach Township and St.

Elizabeth Ann Seton in Manchester, "We're about \$900,000 short," Daily said.

But she isn't worried.

"If necessary, we can build with what we have," she said.

With 110 students and about 20 full-time staffers today, All Saints is the only Roman Catholic school south of Toms River and north of Galloway.

"We'll be up to grade eight by 2003," Daily said. "Then at that point, it's up to

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Faith

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the diocese as to whether we'll continue to grow."

Lighthouse Christian Academy, the only other private school in town, is a Baptist-affiliated grade school on Hilliard Boulevard.

That school marked its 20th anniversary in 1999 and boasts an enrollment of 305 preschool through sixth-grade students, said Principal Joyce Boyd Fort.

At Lighthouse, initial discussions are under way to expand up to eighth grade, Fort said.

"This area has grown tremendously," she said. "Our enrollment keeps increasing. We're definitely meeting a need."

Stafford has seen its population jump by more than 30 percent since

1990, when the official figure was 13,325. Latest estimates have the figure higher than 17,500.

Since 1990, the number of children using township recreation programs and equipment has increased 300 percent, according to municipal figures.

Fort said schools such as Lighthouse and All Saints are attractive to Christians and non-Christians alike due to the smaller class sizes and their ability to tailor the curriculum to individual needs.

Mayor Carl W. Block said that if All Saints establishes its own school building, he expects to see a significant spike in the number of students enrolled there.

"Once you have a building, the community knows you're serious, once they see a building and it's easier to attract students," he said. "They'll send their children there and act on faith."

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First-grade teacher Kathy Yurkevich, above, helps a student during small-group activities Tuesday at the All Saints Regional Catholic School in Stafford Township. Below, a sign is posted on the classroom door. Staff photos by Bill Gross

All Saints Catholic School plans to build new facility on Route 72

■ School officials have started working to raise the \$5 million for the project; they expect a fall 2000 opening.

By HEATHER HARLAN
Staff Writer

STAFFORD TOWNSHIP — After one year in operation, All Saints Regional Catholic School has nearly outgrown its space on Route 9.

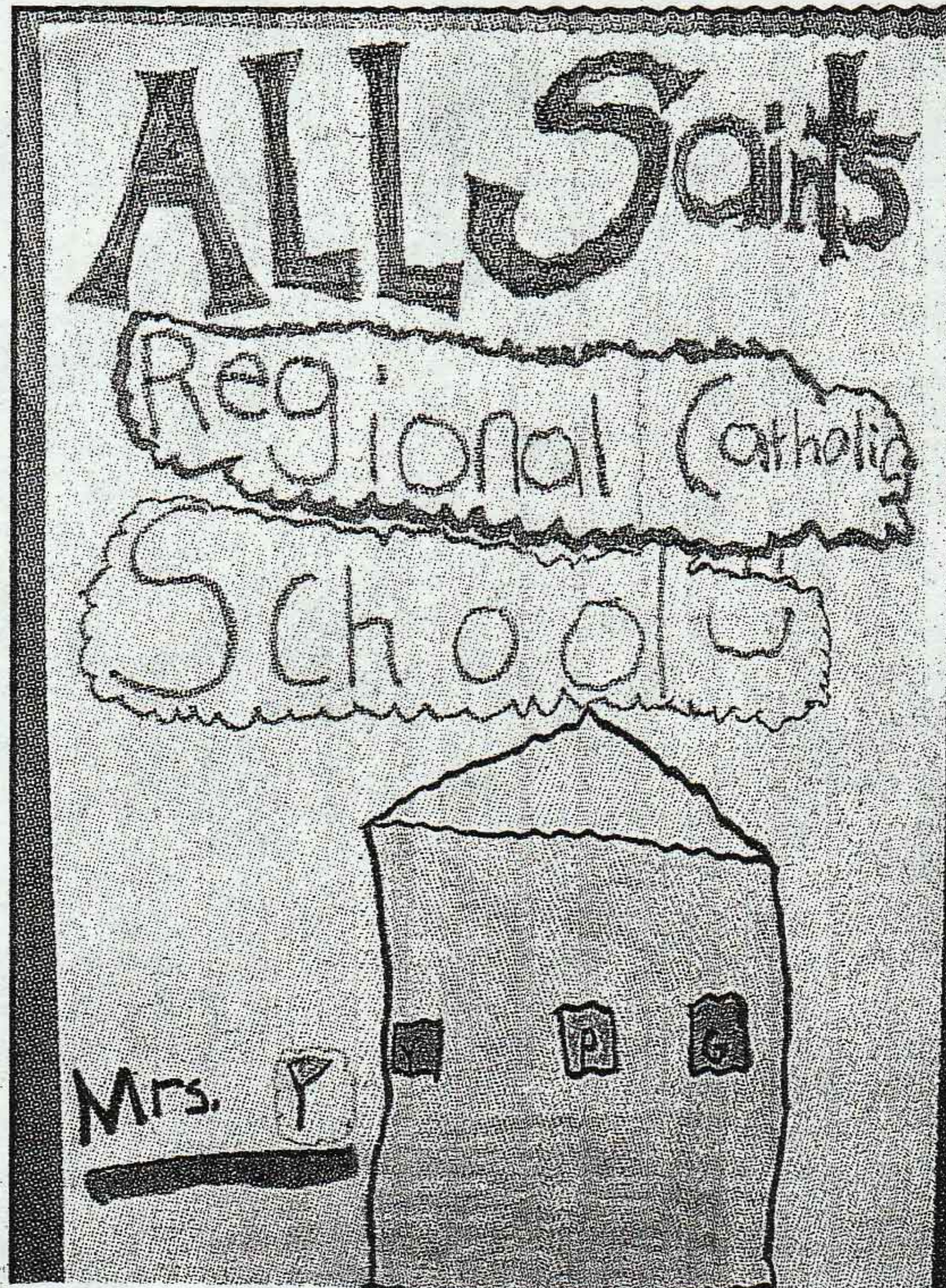
Administrators are already crafting plans to construct a new facility behind Wal-mart on Route 72, where kindergarten through eighth grade will be offered.

With a fall 2000 opening expected, officials have started to raise the \$5 million needed to make the school a reality, Sister Jeannette Daily, principal of All Saints, said Tuesday.

The amount does not include the acquisition of the new 20-acre site, which the Diocese of Trenton secured two years ago. Of the needed funding, school officials have already received promises for \$3.3 million, Daily said.

"We're really in need right now of the remaining funding," she said. "We're looking for corporate sponsors."

The principal explained the surge in student



Catholic school to be built in Stafford

By TRACY ROBINSON

STAFFORD — It was part of the original plan when the Archdiocese of Trenton perceived a need for a Catholic school in southern Ocean County and now it is finally coming to fruition.

The new All Saints School planned for a more than 20-acre parcel behind Wal-Mart off Route 72 has been in the works since the beginning, according to Principal Sister Jeannette Daily.

"It was always meant to be temporary," Sister Daily said speaking of the current school building located next to St. Mary's Parish Center on Route 9 in Stafford.

Initially a survey was taken of local parishioners to see if there was a demand for such a parochial school and when it was deemed so, a temporary structure was erected at the current site to meet the educational needs of the students, said the principal.

In the meantime members of the local diocese have been planning and saving for the day when the bigger school can be built.

The opening date is currently

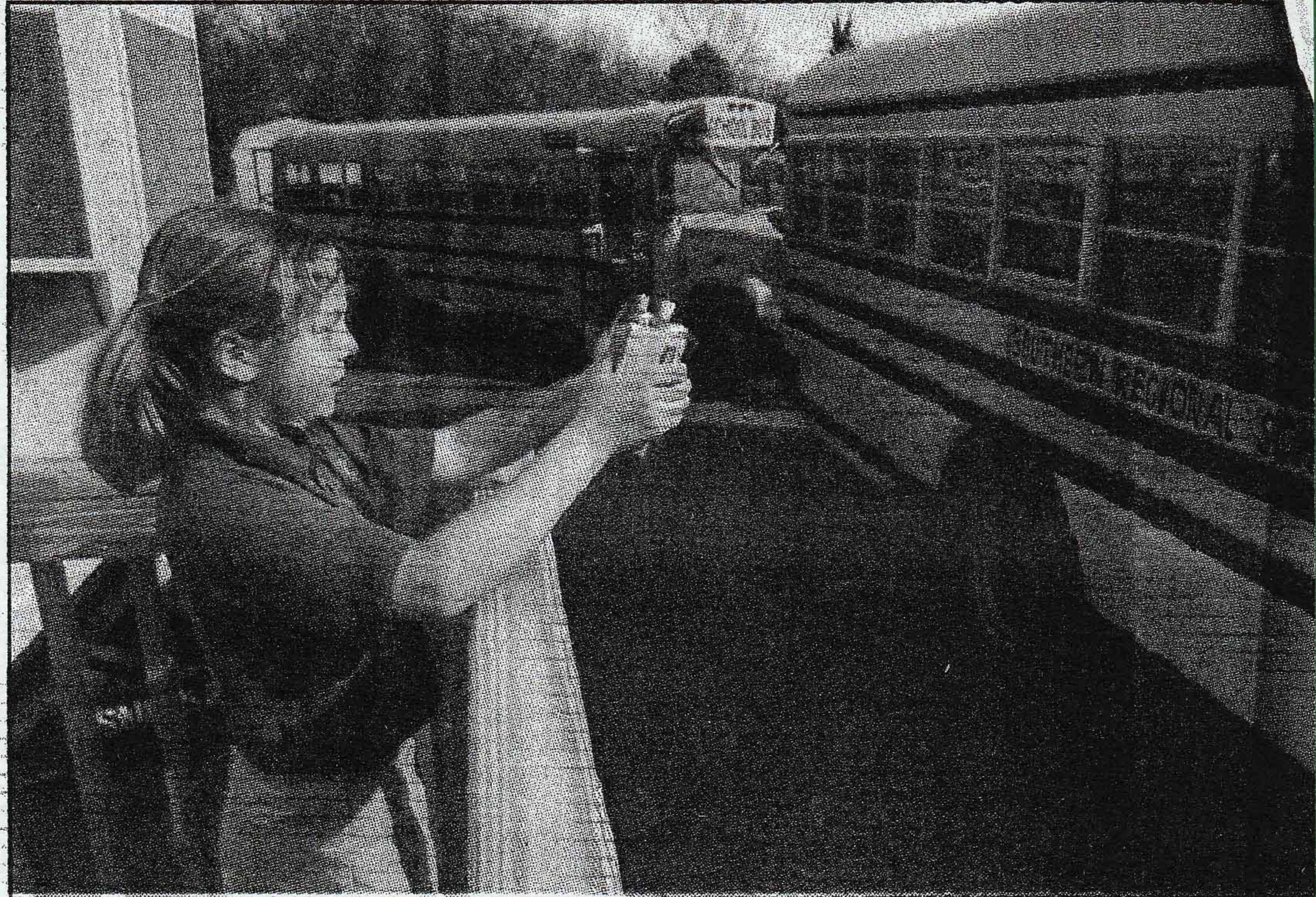
set for fall 2001, she said.

Since its inception the school has been growing rapidly in terms of the number of students enrolled there.

In 1997 there were only 23 students, then in 1998 there were 75. The problem has caused them in the past to go out and get trailers to hold all

the additional children year the school educates pupils from kinderg

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Times Beacon photo by Robert Ward

Tara Cunningham, 10, Barnegat, claps erasers outside All Saints School.

All Saints

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through fourth grade. Each year as the students get older the school adds another grade to accommodate them and they may keep on growing into a high school someday, the sister said.

Next year they expect to add a fifth grade, and the school will definitely go up to eighth grade eventually, said the principal.

The issue of a possible parochial high school was uncertain however, until recently when they acquired another piece of land adjacent to the originally owned old airport property, she said.

"So eventually if the need keeps growing, we do have land to build a high school next to the elementary school," she said.

To the educator it looks as if things may be going that way.

The population in this whole

Ocean County and Monmouth County area is growing so rapidly, so I do think there will be a need eventually," she said.

Now it might just be a matter of getting enough money for the project.

According to Sister Daily, they are currently \$900,000 short of what is needed to build phase one.

The Archdiocese of Trenton has contributed money as well as local Roman Catholic parishes, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Whiting, St. Pius X, Forked River, St. Mary's, Barnegat, St. Francis, Long Beach Island and St. Theresa, Tuckerton, Sister Daily said, adding that the school has also received private donations and would welcome more.

"That of course, along with tuition is what currently funds the school," she said.

The new elementary school, slated to open in September of 2001, will feature a preschool program and will educate up to

the sixth grade. The first phase of the building will have a library or media center as well as offer computer, fine arts and language classes for the students. A gymnasium, science lab and a chapel are planned for the second phase.

The essential portions of the building, such as the basic classrooms will be built, then "as we get the money we will complete various other areas," she said.

Future expansion could even "go to 600 students," Sister Daily said.

"It is very exciting and I think what is very exciting about it is, we will be like our logo, a rising sun in southern Ocean County," she said.

Terry Roberts, the mother of a 7-year-old student already attending the school said she also anticipates the new structure.

"When my other children were of age there wasn't a Catholic school available in this area," said the Barnegat resident who herself attended parochial

school.

Roberts said she sent her youngest son to the school to enjoy the benefits of a small class size and the unique educational idea that not all children learn in the same way.

"I like the philosophy of the school that they cater to the whole child," Roberts said adding they are interested in emotional and spiritual needs of the students as well as the intellectual needs.

At All Saints School the principal believes that every child is gifted and talented, said Sister Daily explaining their educational approach.

"What it all comes down to is to have a child who is very, very happy to go to school," said Roberts.

According to Sister Daily, they are hoping to gain approval from the Stafford Planning Board in the spring and be educating the new building by the fall of 2001.

It's a Giant Leap of Faith For New Catholic School



School ground breaking Sunday

By **BRYAN HOLT**

STAFFORD — Ocean County's only Catholic School south of Toms River has been growing at a steady pace since it first opened its doors two years ago.

"The rising sun in Ocean County" — All Saints Regional Catholic School, Route 9 will hold a ground breaking ceremony Sunday, 1 p.m., for a new 40,000-square-foot, \$4.2 million school. Upon completion of the construction the school will educate grades kindergarten through - eighth.

The new school building is projected to be completed in 2001. It will be constructed on the corner of McKinley Avenue and Doc Cramer Boulevard (behind Wal-Mart) here. It has been designed by the Linwood based architectural firm of Fenwick & Fenwick.

"Construction of the school will be in phases," said Sister Jeanette Daily, principal of the school. "Phase one will consist of mainly classrooms, a multi-purpose room and a media center/library."

As construction is completed

on each phase another grade level will be added to the school. The school, currently located on Route 9, here, has an enrollment of 125 pupils in grades K-through-4. Two modular units situated behind the school have been used as classrooms to help with the school's ever-growing enrollment, Daily said.

"Construction will be done in three or four phases," Daily said. "Next year we will have fifth grade students and each year we will take another grade as construction progresses."

The school's enrollment comes primarily from five parishes, St. Pius, Forked River, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Whiting, St. Francis, Long Beach Island, St. Theresa, Tuckerton and St. Mary's, Barnegat, Daily said.

Funding for the construction of the school has come from the five parishes, the Diocese of Trenton and through \$7,000 in donations raised by All-Saints, Daily said.

All-Saints will also be soliciting corporate donations for construction of the school, corporate donors will have their name or logo placed on part of the school.

Daily said.

"The more donations we get the faster we will be able to move with construction," Daily said. "We are currently in the process of coming up with a price for corporate donations and we will be giving a presentation at the Rams Head Inn (Egg Harbor Township) soon to possible corporate sponsors. We will give them tentative prices so that they can decide if they would be able to contribute."

Donations for the construction project will be made in memory of the donor and all donors will be honored for their gift, Daily said.

The third phase of construction at the school will include a gymnasium and a chapel, Daily said.

Events on Dec. 12 will begin with a Mass at 11:30, ground breaking ceremony at 1 p.m. and a reception afterward in St. Mary's Parish Center, here.

Although permission has not yet been granted by the Diocese and no name has been chosen for a potential high school, additional adjacent land is in the process of being acquired



David Gard

New Faith in the Future

Catholic Educators Think Southern Ocean County Will Prove a Fertile Land for All Saints Expansion

DIG IT: Bishop John Smith (with shovel) and Roman Catholic educators from the Diocese of Trenton are convinced that the All Saints Regional School, for which the bishop is breaking ground, will be blessed with many students. After all, the current school, which opened in 1997 with just two grades and 23 students, has already expanded to five grades serving 120 children.

Breaking ground for new school in parish

■ The Catholic school in Stafford will hold a Sunday ceremony for its planned building for kindergarten through eighth grade.

By **BRYAN HOLT**
STAFF WRITER

STAFFORD — Southern Ocean County's only Roman Catholic school will break ground this weekend for a new building enabling it to accommodate students up to the eighth grade.

All Saints Regional Roman Catholic School, now a kindergarten-through-fourth grade school on Route 9, will hold a groundbreaking ceremony at 1 p.m. Sunday for its planned school at McKinley Avenue and Doc Cramer Boulevard. The 40,000-square-foot, \$4.2 million school is projected to be completed

Adjacent land is also being acquired for what may become a high school, although permission for such a building has not yet been granted by the diocese, said Sister Jeanette Daily, principal of All Saints.

The school, designed by the Linwood architectural firm of Fenwick & Fenwick, will be in three or four phases, Daily said.

As construction is completed on each phase, another grade level will be added to the school. The school now has an enrollment of 125 pupils. Two modular units situated behind the school have been used as classrooms to help with the school's ever-growing enrollment since it was founded two years ago, Daily said.

"Next year, we will have fifth-grade students," Daily said. The eighth grade would be added by 2003, Daily said.

Phase 1 of the project will consist of classrooms, a multipurpose room, and a media center and library. Later phases will add a gymnasium and chapel.

The school's enrollment comes primarily from five southern Ocean County parishes: St. Pius in Forked River, Lacey; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Whiting, Manchester; St. Francis on Long Beach Island; St. Theresa's in Tuckerton; and St. Mary's in Barnegat.

Funding for the construction of the school has come from the five parishes, the Diocese of Trenton and through \$7,000 in donations raised by All Saints, Daily said.

All Saints will also be soliciting corporate donations for construction of the school. Corporate donors will have their names or logos placed on part of the school.

"The more donations we get, the faster we will be able to move with construction," Daily said. "We are currently in the process of coming up with a price for corporate donations, and we will be giving a presentation at the Ram's Head Inn (in Galloway) soon to possible corporate sponsors. We will give them tentative prices so that they can decide if they would be able to contribute."

All donors will be honored for their gifts, Daily said.

Sunday's groundbreaking ceremony will be followed by a reception in St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 9, Stafford.

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All Saints breaks ground for larger school building

By DOUG BERGEN
Staff Writer, (856) 794-5110

STAFFORD TOWNSHIP — The All Saints Regional Catholic School broke ground Sunday on a new school the diocese hopes to complete by September 2001.

The only parochial school in southern Ocean County cannot build fast enough to keep up with enrollment.

The new 40,000-square-foot school will include 20 classrooms for children in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, according to Sister Jeannette Daily, the school principal.

The school currently teaches 120 children in grades kindergarten to fourth at a Route 9 building

on the grounds of St. Mary's Parish Center in Manahawkin.

The new building will be behind the Wal-Mart at Doc Cramer Boulevard and McKinley Avenue in Manahawkin.

The school started in 1997 with 23 children in kindergarten and first grade. The new building will

open with pre-kindergarten to sixth-grade classes and eventually expand to eighth grade, Daily said.

The school owns an adjacent piece of property that could one day house a Catholic high school, Daily said.

Sunday's groundbreaking ceremony was attended by the Rev. John Smith, bishop of the Diocese of Trenton. It also included representatives of each of the five parishes that make up the

school's sending district: St. Mary's in Barnegat, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Whiting, St. Pius X in Forked River, St. Francis in Brant Beach and St. Theresa's in Tuckerton.

Stafford Township Mayor Carl Block and Long Beach Township Mayor James Mancini were also on hand, Daily said.

The school raised \$700,000 and received financial support from the diocese and the parishes to save \$4.2 million for the first phase of the construction project, according to Daily.

The school still hopes to raise \$1 million from corporate sponsors to complete the project with a gymnasium and chapel.

The school anticipates enrolling 400 students when the school first opens. Enrollment could eventually reach as high as 600 students, Daily said.

The staff will include at least 20 full-time teachers, she said.

"Our goal is to have a whole child education," Daily said. "We want to help children grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually."

Daily said the school has been successful in meeting individual children's needs. The school works hard to determine what they know and what they need to know, she said.

"Parents need to remember that every child is gifted and talented, not just the ones in those programs. We need to help parents discover that. I really want our children to grow up knowing what their gifts are and where their talents are. I think we forget that when we're educating children."

Construction under way at Catholic grade school

By **BRYAN HOLT**

STAFFORD — A crowd of over 300 people turned out as Southern Ocean County's only Roman Catholic school broke ground this weekend for a new building with a ceremony that included Bishop John Smith of the Diocese of Trenton. Upon completion the new building will enable the school to accommodate students up to the eighth grade.

All Saints Regional Roman Catholic School, now a kindergarten-through-fourth grade school, Route 9, will construct a new K-8 school at McKinley Avenue and Doc Cramer Boulevard. The 40,000-square-foot, \$4.2 million school is projected to be completed in 2001.

"We had an excellent turnout and we are very happy with the way things are going," said Sister Jeanette Daily, principal of All-Saints. "Right now our big thing is getting the donations for the first part of construction of the school."

In a little over a week the school was able to raise \$17,000 toward the construction of the new building, Sister Daily said.

"That is a small drop in the bucket toward our goal and every little bit that we can raise counts," Sister Daily said.

The goal of All-Saints is to raise over \$4 million to speed construction of the building.

Adjacent land is also being acquired for what may become a high school, although permission for such a building has not yet been granted by the diocese, said Sister Daily.

The school has not yet begun the bidding process for construction of the new K-8 school, designed by the Linwood architectural firm of Fenwick & Fenwick.

Initial plans call for the school to be constructed in three or four phases. This will allow for certain areas of the school to become operational and hold classes as the building is constructed, the principal said.

As construction is completed on each phase, another grade level will be added to the school. The school now has an enrollment of 125 pupils. Two modular units situated behind the school have been used as classrooms to help with the school's ever-growing enrollment since it was founded two years ago, Sister Daily said.

Phase one of the project will consist of classrooms, a multi-purpose room and a media center and library. Later phases will add a gymnasium and chapel.

The school's enrollment comes primarily from five southern Ocean County parishes: St. Pius in Forked River, Lacey; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Whiting, Manchester; St. Francis on Long Beach Island; St. Theresa's in Tuckerton; and St. Mary's in Barnegat.

Funding for the construction of the school has come from the five parishes, the Diocese of Trenton and through \$7,000 in donations raised by All Saints, according to Sister Daily.