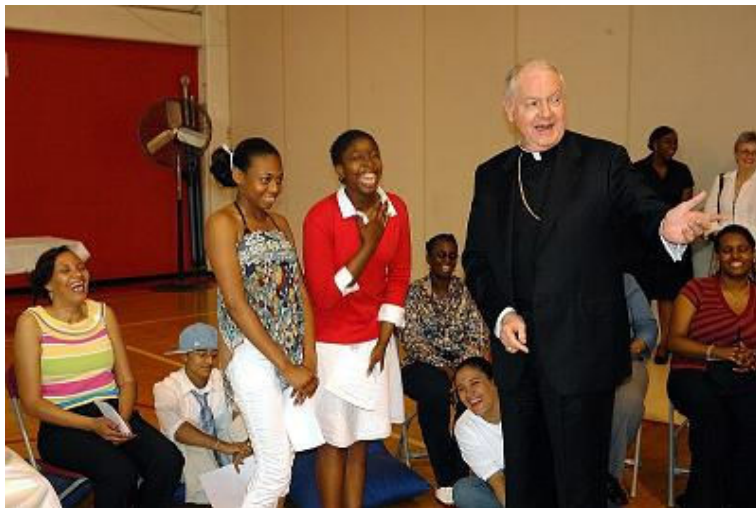




Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York and Catholic Big Sisters and Big Brothers Celebrate the Completion of the First ESDC Grant Project that increases Agency's Ability to Serve At-Risk Youth



July 11, 2007, New York, New York – The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York and Catholic Big Sisters and Big Brothers (CBSBB) announce the completion of the first of 29 projects funded by a \$5 million Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) Grant. The Grant was awarded to 20 agencies within the Catholic Charities federation of organizations that provide human services throughout the New York area to improve their ability to provide vital services in the region.

CBSBB purchased and installed a soundproof divider in their gymnasium to create separate space for girls and boys, enabling this 100-year old organization to hold true to its tradition of gender-specific programming for at-risk youth ranging in age from 7 to 17.

“The divider essentially doubles our space and our ability to host boys and girls programs simultaneously, rather than rotate days to accommodate the demand” commented Emily Forman, Executive Director for Catholic Big Sisters and Big Brothers. Forman added, “Some of our programs touch on very sensitive subjects. This fully-sound proof divider affords enough privacy that both boys and girls can feel comfortable sharing their feelings and discussing gender-related issues during their separate activities.”

CBSBB provides gender-specific services designed to promote mutual respect between the sexes and comprehensive family-based services including one-to-one mentoring, family counseling, group support and skill-based programs.

To celebrate the completion of the project, His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan led a special prayer service to bless the facility and recognize the vital service that this agency provides to the community.

Monsignor Kevin Sullivan congratulated CBSBB by holding a Board meeting at the location in the gymnasium and giving the Board a tour of the facility after the blessing. “CBSBB has led us to this important first milestone as we put these ESDC Grant dollars to work for New York. The men and women of this organization are to be congratulated on the speedy completion of their project – the first of many for our communities,” Monsignor Sullivan said.

The grants throughout the Archdiocese of New York will enable Catholic Charities agencies to preserve their facilities, replace leaky roofs, upgrade computers, refurbish a children’s playground, repair bathrooms and kitchens in residential facilities and pave a deteriorating parking lot at a senior center.

The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York is a federation of 91 agencies that provide help and create hope in the lives of thousands of New Yorkers – non-Catholics and Catholics alike. The services provided by these agencies touch almost every human need. Together the programs of these agencies protect and nurture children and youth; feed the hungry and shelter the homeless; strengthen families and resolve crises, support the physically and emotionally challenged; and welcome and integrate immigrants and refugees. For more information about The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, please call 1.888.744.7900 or visit Catholic Charities website, www.catholiccharitiesny.org.