

Press release July 17/07- Environmentally Friendly Ursuline Motherhouse



The Rotary Club of Chatham Sunrise met for its weekly meeting this morning, but not at its usual location at Smitty's on Grand Ave. This morning the club met in the Reception Area of the new Ursuline Motherhouse, Villa Angela, surrounded by beautiful paintings, cabinetry and artefacts moved by the Ursulines to their new home. Members of the club were welcomed by Sisters Frances Ryan and Claire St. Pierre who spoke with them about the unique characteristics of the house which make it so special.

Villa Angela is the environmentally conscious brainchild of dozens of Sisters, architects and engineers. The Motherhouse responds to the Sisters consciousness of their imprint on the landscape; of what they bring with them,

how they use the Earth while on it, and what they leave behind. The Motherhouse delivers an environmentally sustainable and healthy home for its 50 residents and 35 staff members.

In the earliest stages of the design of the building, the Ursulines were very eager to explore LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).

LEED is a 72-point green building rating system which grants certification at 4 levels depending on the nature of decisions and materials used throughout the course of the project (Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum). The design team and the Ursulines decided to pursue Gold certification, requiring at least 39 of the 72 points. Sisters, consultants and friends were happy to receive notification in May, 2007, that **Villa Angela successfully received GOLD!** The home is the first LEED certified project in Southwestern Ontario and the first religious building to receive Gold certification in Ontario!



The pursuit of LEED status saw the incorporation of a variety of earth-friendly materials, systems, and concepts for the design and daily operation of the Motherhouse. Water and energy demands have been decreased substantially by the use of ultra-low flow showerheads, day lighting/occupancy sensors, a cistern to collect water for non-potable uses, and a 27-well Ground Source Heat Pump System. The GSHP system's borehole field consists of 300' deep wells looping water through the system and back into the building, heating and cooling it as the seasons demand. **Materials used in the home were carefully chosen for long-life characteristics, natural or recycled content, high insulation values, and manufacturing proximities to the site, reducing transportation energies.** As well, the maintenance staff has replaced all non-Earth friendly products with *Green products where available.



As Rotarians toured through Villa Angela this morning, Sister Claire pointing out mechanical systems, carpet materials, the **Enviroshake roof**, many comments could be heard about the beauty of the home and the joy the Sisters must find here. Terra Kitzul of Jordan & Cook Architect Ltd., member of both the Ursuline Motherhouse design team and Sunrise Rotary, explained that, "...throughout all phases of design, we kept in the back our of heads a reminder that, first and foremost, Villa Angela

is a *home* for 50 women.

The quality of personal spaces where these Sisters live has always been a priority. Femininity resonates warmth, beauty, care, appreciation, comfort and is evident in the material, colour selections and soft effectiveness of natural light in many gathering spaces, and all "residents rooms."

Many Sisters require special care and consideration. All efforts have been made to accommodate these needs in a warm, non-institutional setting. The entire North end of the First Floor has been provided as an Infirmary. These Sisters have 24-hour Nursing care, a dining room, and closed captioning in their rooms so that they may share in daily mass and events on those days when it is difficult to join the other Sisters in the Chapel themselves.



The Ursulines are women who have spent their lives simply and in the service of others. They are women of religion, of spirit and prayer, but they are also women of the arts, women of education, and women of the environment. Villa Angela has given them the opportunity to present today's Ursuline women to Chatham-Kent.



Jim Nash thanked the sisters for the wonderful tour and presented Sr. Claire with a book which she signed for the Literary Angels Program.