

CARITAS FAMILY SOLUTIONS INVESTS IN THE COMMUNITY WITH PURCHASE OF 64,000 SQ. FT. FACILITY

November 4 2014 3:50 PM



CARITAS

FAMILY SOLUTIONS

BELLEVILLE, IL (Nov. 4, 2014) ---- Gary Huelsmann, MSW, CEO at Caritas FamilySolutions (Caritas), announced the purchase of the 64,000 square foot building at 900 Royal Heights Road in Belleville. The property formerly housed a nursing home.

Huelsmann said, "Currently, at the Royal Heights Building, Caritas houses the St. John Bosco Children's Center serving children ages 6 through 12 who have been neglected or severely abused. By purchasing the building, it will enable us to serve many more clients in a variety of ways, including upgrading and making the facility more child friendly; expanding the number of cottages to house children; and providing more therapy rooms. It also allows us to consolidate our regional operations under one roof that will offer foster care and adoption services along with the children's center in order to become more efficient and cost effective."

The building not only will serve the immediate needs of Caritas, it will become a social services collaborative building where other nonprofit organizations will be located. Huelsmann stated, "We currently are in talks with several nonprofit organizations that are looking to lease space in the building. In addition, a nonprofit incubator will be established where smaller nonprofits can share space and services."

"We continue to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community by creating a loving, stable environment for those in need, and this project allows Caritas to build more infrastructure to better serve the Metro-East region. It also brings economic development to that section of town by repurposing an existing structure," expressed Huelsmann.

The decision to purchase the building came partly because of the findings from a feasibility assessment conducted in January 2013 by nonprofit lender and real estate consultant IFF. The study determined space needs, potential costs, and financing scenarios for different options including ownership of the Royal Heights property. IFF provided a \$525,000 loan toward the \$3.5 million project to acquire and renovate the facility.

"We support the mission of Caritas Family Solutions helping people at any stage of life, from foster care to senior assisted living," said Michelle Gleason, senior loan officer in IFF's St. Louis office. "It's exciting to be part of this project to expand social services and establish a nonprofit incubator in the Belleville community. Our involvement illustrates our longstanding presence not only in the state of Illinois, but in the Metro-East region of the St. Louis metropolitan area."

In addition to the IFF loan, financing for the purchase and renovation of the property has been secured through the Bank of Belleville.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to assist Caritas Family Solutions in their efforts to expand the important work they do in our community to strengthen the lives of so

many. We congratulate them for their perseverance in their mission and thank them for making our community a better place to live, work and raise a family," said Rick Tschudin, vice president for Bank of Belleville.

Caritas Family Solutions, founded in 1947, is a nonprofit, social services agency providing adoption, pregnancy care, foster care, counseling, senior assisted living, senior employment, Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs) for people with developmental disabilities, juvenile offender therapy programs, and the St. John Bosco Children's Center for abused and neglected children. Caritas serves more than 4,400 individuals annually throughout its 42-county service area through a network of quality services with a spirited, dedicated, professional staff who serve others with respect and dignity at every stage of life. Offices are located in Belleville, Carterville, Mount Vernon, Olney, East Alton, and Effingham. For additional information, visit the Caritas Family Solutions website at www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.