

Leadership changes as AIDS ministry marks 20th anniversary

As the Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry marks its 20th anniversary this year, it has bid a fond farewell to a respected chief executive officer and has welcomed a new leader with extensive experience in advocating for people with HIV/AIDS.

Bart Winters, 54, has accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer of Marillac House and the St. Vincent DePaul Center, operated by the Daughters of Charity Ministries of Chicago.

Michelle Wetzel, 46, has been named to succeed Winters. She had served since 2001 as Staff Attorney for the HIV/AIDS Project of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago.

During his three years at the helm of the AIDS ministry, Winters was a driving force in restructuring the ministry's board of directors and redirecting its development efforts toward a broader and more stable base, says Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., President of the AIDS ministry.

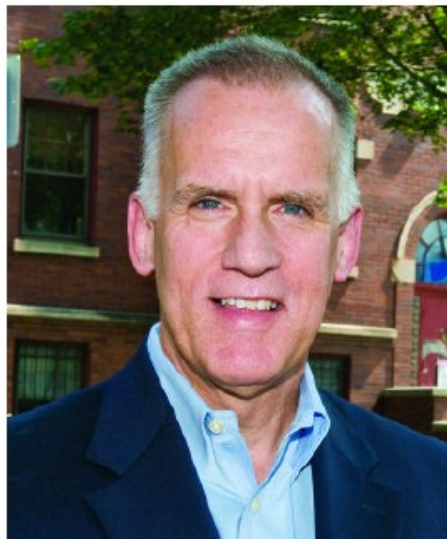
Winters also played a key role in developing plans for Alexian Brothers Bettendorf Place, a facility on Chicago's south side that will offer permanent supportive housing for people with HIV/AIDS. The facility will extend the Alexian Brothers' continuum of care for people with HIV/AIDS beyond transitional housing, including Alexian Brothers Bonaventure House on Chicago's north side and Alexian Brothers The Harbor in Waukegan, Ill.

Colleagues and residents alike respected Winters for his listening abilities and for treating everyone with kindness and respect. "Bart's personality and commitment to the values of the Alexian Brothers served him well during his tenure," Brother Dan says.

At a dinner held in Winters' honor by The Harbor, one resident told Winters:

"You told us to be the change we want to see in the world. You transformed this place." At Bonaventure House, "Bart continued the Brothers' efforts to strengthen the religious atmosphere and supported expanding spiritual care of the residents," Brother Dan says.

Wetzel traces her involvement with HIV/AIDS advocacy to the founding of the AIDS ministry in 1989, when she was among the first Bonaventure House volunteers. She later founded a pastoral-care network for people with HIV/AIDS in the Holland, Mich., area. After graduating in



focus for Wetzel in her HIV/AIDS advocacy work. "I very much believe housing equals health care," she says. "If someone is not stably housed, they cannot possibly manage their HIV."

Expanding the Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry through Bettendorf Place and collaboration with other AIDS agencies and programs will be top priorities for Wetzel, who says her appointment as Chief Executive Officer "is like coming full circle for me."

One of her first orders of business was the Founder's Day Festival, a June 6 celebration of the 20th anniversary of the AIDS



Michelle Wetzel (right) has been named to succeed Bart Winters (left) as Chief Executive Officer of the Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry. Wetzel has extensive experience in advocating for people with HIV/AIDS.

1999 from the DePaul University College of Law, she worked for Prairie State Legal Services in Waukegan and served on the The Harbor's Advisory Committee. "We have been well acquainted with Michelle's work in AIDS housing in the public sector, and she is as deeply committed to the rights of persons living with AIDS as any of the Brothers," Brother Dan says.

Housing always has been a major

ministry at Bonaventure House. During the celebration, the ministry recognized Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Janet Hasz, Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Providers Association, for their strong support of the ministry and the fight against HIV/AIDS. A representative from the mayor's office accepted the Alexian Award of Excellence on Daley's behalf, and Hasz received the President's Award.