

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sister Karen's PeacePrints™ to Reach More Ex-Offenders through Merger of Organizations

Buffalo, NY, 1/15/09 – The legacy of Sister Karen Klimczak's PeacePrints™ is growing thanks to a planned merger of two prominent prison ministries in WNY. On January 14, 2009, the Executive Boards of Sister Karen's HOPE of Buffalo, Inc. and Cephass Attica, Inc. confirmed the unanimous vote to merge into one organization.

This merger allows the two to share resources and infrastructure and more effectively reach out to the incarcerated and newly released in WNY. The new name of the organization is "PeacePrints™ Prison Ministries." It will be an expanded force developing its prison ministries in Buffalo and surrounding communities including Rochester.

"With Transitional Housing for ex-offenders having been the focus of both Cephass and HOPE, we feel we will now have an even stronger presence and ability to serve, as we unite our resources and efforts under one organization," said Brother Michael Oberst, Executive Director of Cephass.

While each program (Cephass Prison Groups, Cephass House, Bissonette House, HOPE Van Service, and PeacePrints™ Nonviolence Ministry) will maintain its services, the merger will allow The PeacePrints™ Prison Ministries to share administrative and functional costs, to combine volunteer, outreach and fundraising resources, and to more aptly meet the needs of ex-offenders with a comprehensive and focused program of ministry.

One of the first events planned by the PeacePrints™ Prison Ministries is the Phoenix Awards Dinner on March 21, 2009 at the Buffalo Convention Center. The awards recognize men and women who have taken the help offered by prison ministries and used it to succeed.

Sister Karen's order, the Sisters of St. Joseph agreed to the naming of the new organization "PeacePrints™ Prison Ministries." "PeacePrints™" has become a well recognized message in Western New York since Sister Karen's untimely death by murder in April of 2006. The familiar image of the dove shaped bumper stickers and yard signs have popped up throughout the region since her death. It is a message that has been carried on with much love and dedication, and it is with respect and honor and humility that Cephass and HOPE embrace not just the name but the very meaning of "PeacePrints™" in the continued and strengthened spirit of ministry.

Bishop Edward Kmiec appointed Fr. Bob Gebhard as Coordinator of Apostolic Activity for Central Buffalo in May of 2008. One of his endeavors was to pursue the possible merger of Hope and Cephas, both organizations being of strong faith presence and committed to ministry to incarcerated individuals and releasees.

The United Way, Not For Profit Resources Center funded the merger. For more information, please contact Father Bob Gebhard 832-1627 or bobgebjr50@aol.com

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