

## RETIREE GIVES BUILDING TO TREATMENT PROGRAM

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- Author/Byline: By LARRY BARSZEWSKI Staff Writer
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The Bells of St. Mary's rang for a Lake Worth drug treatment program on Wednesday when a Boca Raton retiree gave the nonprofit group an office building worth more than a half-million dollars.

Growing Together program officials did not have the faith shown in the 1945 film classic by Ingrid Bergman's Sister Superior, who used prayer and persistence to persuade a businessman to let his brand new office building replace her run-down school next door.

But the program's fortunes were as good when Dominick Iacovone said he would donate his three-story, 20,000-square-foot building he owned. The building sat across a parking lot from the cramped office Growing Together is leasing for \$30,000 a year.

"Miracles happen," said the Rev. John Mangrum, an Episcopal priest and a member of Growing Together's board of directors.

Maybe it is just coincidence that Nathaniel Crosby - son of Bing Crosby who played Father O'Malley in The Bells of St. Mary's - is a member of the program's advisory council.

Growing Together, a comprehensive treatment program for youths ages 12 to 22, has treated more than 250 people in its six years of operation and currently has 54 clients.

Youths from Miami to Martin County spend 14 to 18 months in the program and attend group, one-on-one family and peer counseling sessions.

Barbara Griffith, executive director, said officials had been looking for a better location but had not considered Iacovone's building on Lake Avenue. The building was rented by a Tru-Valu Drug Store until a few months ago.

Iacovone has been charging Growing Together \$15 a month for egress across his parking lot, and it was while he was picking up a check a few months ago that Griffith did Bergman proud.

"He said he was thinking of donating the building to a nonprofit agency, and I said, 'Why not us?'" Griffith said.

Iacovone agreed, with the program paying \$90,000 for his parking lot and picking up the building for free.

Iacovone's other condition was that the building be named in memory of his daughter, Marian Sefert, who died of cancer seven years ago. Sefert was active in social work. She had been Commissioner of Welfare in New York City and served in the Nixon and Carter administrations, Iacovone said.

Iacovone, 79, is an engineer who came to the United States from Italy when he was 14 years old. He purchased and remodeled the building in 1972, which he said had originally been built for the Shriners, a fraternal order that is involved in charity efforts.

"I figured this was the best thing they could do with this building," Iacovone said. "It's a great feeling to have somebody use it."

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