

Mount Loretto cites drop in foster children

Says move to end services spurred by fewer referrals citywide

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A sharp reduction in the number of foster children in New York City in recent years helped spur the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mount Loretto, to get out of the foster-care business.

According to the city Human Resources Administration (HRA), which runs the Child Welfare Ad-

ministration (CWA), the Archdiocesan complex in Pleasant Plains is one of many foster-care centers in the city that has seen its referrals dwindle.

The number of children placed by the city in foster homes, group homes and congregate-care facilities dropped 57 percent between 1989 and this year, from 20,906 to 8,988, HRA spokeswoman Karen

Calhoun said.

In the same period, Mount Loretto saw a 45 percent decrease, from 638 kids to 348.

Mount administrators have acknowledged that declining referrals and the resulting loss of income, coupled with the maintenance of an aging, 360-acre campus, pushed them to end the agency's relationship with the

CWA.

Of the kids currently in the Mount's charge, about 100 live on family homes and about 60 reside in nine group homes scattered around the borough.

"There has been a decline of foster care in Staten Island as well as citywide," Ms. Calhoun said. "Right now we actually have more foster homes than we have children."

Ms. Calhoun said several trends have contributed to the decline in

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