



Carpet rolls out to replace rug church pulled

By Marie Szaniszló
Saturday, June 11, 2005

Two days after the Archdiocese of Boston abruptly shuttered a Brighton elementary school to head off a possible sit-in, officials rolled out the red carpet yesterday so that the children of Our Lady of the Presentation could bid each other a proper farewell.

A police motorcade escorted three busloads of students, parents and faculty to Faneuil Hall, where Mayor [Thomas M. Menino](#), Secretary of State William F. Galvin and City Councilor Jerry P. McDermott greeted them, arms outstretched.

"This is phenomenal," Kenna Sullivan said, cradling her 5-year-old son, Ryan, as her other two children raced ahead. "The children have really learned a lesson about what can happen when a community comes together."

The financially beleaguered archdiocese originally planned to permanently close the school yesterday but changed the locks on the doors Wednesday night to head off the kind of sit-in still going on at a half-dozen parishes the archdiocese also has decided to close.

The move backfired. The mayor announced he was "disgusted" and invited the school to hold its graduation and awards ceremony in one of Faneuil Hall's historic meeting rooms. Crystal Bus Lines offered to drive the children. Boston police provided the motorcade. And, last night, the people of Brighton rallied in Oak Square, reasserting their resolve to save the school.

"They've underestimated us," said Kevin M. Carragee, a member of the Presentation School Foundation, which has offered to buy the property at full-market value, preserve the school and add a pre-school, adult-education classes and after-school and summer programs. "We're going to keep on keeping on."

Yesterday, archdiocesan spokesman Terrence Donilon said only that arrangements were being made to return personal items locked in the building. But 12-year-old Sabrina Rubaud was still worried. As a sixth-grader, this year would have been her last at Our Lady of the Presentation, regardless of the archdiocese's decision. But who, she wondered, would feed the school's frog, six fishes and Pokey, a butterfly with a broken wing?

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