

OLP protestors hope to give Church lesson in value of a school

By Erin Smith/ Staff Writer
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What do you do when the Archdiocese of Boston closes your neighborhood school?

Oak Square neighbors decided to throw a party after they learned the archdiocese planned to move the church's tribunals to Our Lady of the Presentation, after rejecting a bid to sell it to the community at market value for an elementary school, preschool and community center.

The archdiocese sold the tribunal building to Boston College, who will take control of the building in 2006.

Supporters celebrated the community while protesting the archdiocese's decision by dancing to "The Twist" and hopping around to Sister Sledge's "We are Family," which has quickly become the theme song for the neighborhood's protest.

Nearby, "I love OLP" was scrawled in the snow with purple paint by an uneven hand. There was a popcorn machine and blue and yellow balloons that decorated Oak Square.

"We have a great community. We're family and we're going to be together until this is over," said Tom O'Brien, one OLP parent who organized the rally.

Parents, community activists and school children in colorful snowsuits marched around Oak Square Common chanting, "The best use is our use!" and "Families, yes. Annulments, no." Most cases brought before the church tribunals involve questions of annulling marriages.

Solidarity shown

Arthur McCaffrey, of Newton, joined in the march Tuesday night in a show of solidarity. McCaffrey is parishioner of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes in Newton Upper Falls, whose status has been in limbo since the archdiocese reversed its earlier decision to close the church in December.

"We wanted to come here to support the cause because the archdiocese is showing the school the same disregard they're showing the parishes," said McCaffrey.

The Council of Parishes, a group protesting all church closings, also decided to support OLP after it learned of the school's closing through media stories, said McCaffrey.

Richard Terrass came to the protest party with his wife and 4-year-old daughter, Charlotte, a student at OLP.

Charlotte tells her parents she loves her school. Terrass said he likes the values OLP teaches Charlotte, such as responsibility and tolerance. Students come from a wide variety of cultures and religions, said Terrass, whose wife is from Peru.

"Without a school in the neighborhood, it will just turn into more student housing for BC and Harvard," said Terrass.


The registration deadline for next fall is soon, and the Terrass family admits they have


Photo Gallery





Brid Martin, right, and her husband, Raymond Martin, join the community rally Tuesday night in support of keeping Our Lady of the Presentation School open as a school. (Staff photo by Jim Walker)

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already starting looking at schools to send their daughter to next year, if OLP closes.

But the Terrases, like many Oak Square families, are unwilling to throw in the towel on their cause just yet.

"Even if it doesn't open this year, there's always next year," said Terrass.

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