

# Schools prepare for Towson Catholic students

As the first day of school approaches, former Towson Catholic High School students are integrating into other secondary institutions in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

For the new schools, the goal is simple: offer a warm and inviting atmosphere.

Many upperclassmen will feel like freshman all over again as they familiarize themselves with their new surroundings.

"I think we'll do a really good job at making them feel at home right from the beginning," said Barbara Nazelrod, president of The Catholic High School of Baltimore. "We'll just try to bring these students into our school community and culture as soon as possible."

When Immaculate Conception parish announced it was closing Towson Catholic in July, 140 students were enrolled.

As families searched for new schools to replace the coeducational Towson Catholic, an interesting trend emerged, with single-gender education favored.

"Many of the young women seemed to want to remain together," said Carol Goldbeck, associate superintendent for Catholic schools. "They wanted to move forward as a unit."

When it starts classes Aug. 24, Catholic High will have 19 former Towson Catholic students. Six freshmen who were to attend the shuttered school will join four sophomores, eight juniors and one senior at Catholic High, which has an expected enrollment of 330.

"I've been very impressed with the young women from Towson Catholic and their families," Nazelrod said.

Ten to 12 former Towson Catholic students will attend all-girls Mercy High School in Baltimore, and nine are expected to attend Maryvale Preparatory School. Goldbeck

said three girls each were expected to attend the Institute of Notre Dame and The Seton Keough School in Baltimore.

All-boys schools will receive minor enrollment boosts, as Goldbeck said four students are enrolled at Mount St. Joseph in Irvington and Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore, and that one will move to Loyola Blakefield in Towson.

Those seeking to continue a coeducational experience have gravitated to two schools, according to Goldbeck. Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Essex, which extended the invitation to Towson Catholic's entire senior class to enroll and is the only remaining coed Catholic high school in Baltimore County, will have up to 18 former Owls.

John Carroll School in Bel Air will take in four students.

Goldbeck said Baltimore Lutheran School in Towson will have 20 former Towson Catholic students, the majority of which will be boys. The other students' final destinations are yet to be determined, the associate superintendent added.

Many schools will be able to ease the transition for students through fall sports teams, which started practice in mid-August.

Some schools like Catholic High have hired former Towson Catholic faculty members.

Goldbeck said the archdiocese is continuing to help others from that school's staff who are looking for employment.

"My concern is that they ideally would be placed in Catholic schools, but also a place where they can make a livelihood," Goldbeck said.