

Homes Lauded As 'Points of Light'

By Stuart Vincent

For 19 years, Pat Shea had labored in relative obscurity to provide pregnant young women with alternatives to abortion. Yesterday, she became one of the "brightly shining lights among the thousand points of light that President Bush speaks of so often," said Vice President Dan Quayle.

"I was so excited," Shea said after receiving the Pope John Paul II Pro-Vita Award from Quayle yesterday at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Malverne. "It's so many years of work and working quietly in the background. You don't expect any recognition, but once in a while it's nice to be recognized."

Quayle presented Shea and the directors of seven similar Long Island programs with the awards — Pro-Vita is pro-life in Latin — which are given each year by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre. In addition to handing out the awards for the diocese, Quayle was honored for his anti-abortion efforts. Actress Patricia Neal, who has written in her autobiography that she had an abortion 30 years ago after she became pregnant by actor Gary Cooper, was also honored for saying publicly that she regrets not having kept her baby.

Prior to the ceremony, Quayle, ac-

panied by Rep. Raymond McGrath (R-Valley Stream) and the Rev. James Lisante, head of the diocese's Family Ministry office, toured Momma's House, the residence run by Shea that cares for young, unmarried women who have opted to keep their babies.

"What struck me most about Momma's House is the love and care that these young women and their children receive from director Pat Shea and the staff," Quayle said. "It's true it's difficult to raise a child alone and it's true that society puts a lot of pressure on pregnant teenagers to have an abortion. It's important that pregnant teens be provided with a real choice and a real alternative to having an abortion."

Jodie DeFato, one of four women who live at Momma's House next door to Our Lady of Lourdes school and church, spoke to an audience of clergy, Catholic school children, politicians and other guests of her experience of having a baby at age 15.

"I knew I wanted to have my child but I didn't know how," said DeFato, now 17, who is from Mastic Beach and has lived at the home since she gave birth to her son, James, about 16 months ago. "Momma's House is making it possible for me to raise my son

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and to finish school."

DeFato, a senior at Malverne High School who plans to go to college, said the experience of addressing the audience and meeting Quayle was "scary as hell . . . my legs were shaking the whole time." She also said there was a need for more homes like Momma's House.

"This program only holds four girls and there's a lot more than four girls who need help," she said.

Shea said the 4-year-old home, operated by Birthright of Nassau-Suffolk, an anti-abortion group, has a 10-person waiting list.

As Quayle made his one-hour stop in Malverne, a phalanx of secret service agents and police checked

press credentials, camera bags and pocketbooks of those attending the ceremonies and patrolled the hallways and rooftops at the school. Roads around the school were cordoned off hours before Quayle's arrival, while the vice president met with the editorial board of Newsday and later had lunch with local Republican politicians and business executives at the Coral House Restaurant in Baldwin.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience . . . I've been the owner here for 13 years and this was by far the most exciting occurrence," said restaurant owner Bill Ferguson, who had been asked Friday by Rep. Norman Lent (R-East Rockaway) to handle the luncheon. Quayle ate broiled salmon with mustard dill sauce, Ferguson said.