



At the Come-Unity Center in Sodus, Fanny Everett, director, removes the empty boxes from the used clothes store; volunteer townspeople like Mrs. Aimee Martin, left, and Mrs. Carolyn Showers take care of sales upstairs, and downstairs in the main room, Phoebe Inglis and Jim Connor talk with a regular visitor about her family.

Self-Help Gets Boost in Wa

Text and Photos by Laurence E. Keefe

Special collections occur nearly every week in parishes around the country.

Often the money goes into something needed right there, like a new furnace for the church or a new roof on the school; but often the money is collected for some cause and disappears . . . never to be really heard of again.

Does it do any good?

In some cases, the answer is a definite yes. The Campaign for Human Development gets its money from an annual collection across the country; the Rochester Human Development Office then grants some of this money locally.

Four of these grants were recently announced for projects in rural Wayne County, East of Rochester. A total of these projects suggests that even the relatively small amount of money the Office of Human Development has had to give out can go a long way fighting poverty and misery.

First of these projects is the Come-Unity Center on the Main Street of Williamson, housed in a trim little storefront. Upstairs is a used clothing store; downstairs, visitors are greeted by volunteers Fanny Everett, Jim Connor and Phoebe Inglis.

Connor, a tall man with a long white beard and several graduate degrees, dresses in work clothes and talks quietly but forcefully. "There are no social agencies in this county except the welfare department," he said explaining the purpose of the Center.

'There are no social agencies in this county except the welfare department.'

"I have been here a couple of years, but it's only lately that people have been coming in with something for the store, like a pair of shoes."

Connor sees the purpose of the Center as a bridge of friendship between middle class townspeople and the rural poor, especially (but not exclusively) migrant blacks.

The \$3,000 from Human Development, said Phoebe Inglis, will help the Center hire a director, who will attract more volunteers.

Next down the road is the Ridge Parent-Child Day Care Center in the basement of St. John's Episcopal Church in Sodus. Operating expenses can barely be met by tuition fees said Mrs. Lynn Samuel, head of the staff.

"The paint brushes disappeared out of the closet," said Mrs. Samuel, "and now that they're gone, we can't afford to replace them. So the kids don't paint."

"When we started, somebody gave us 2,000 paper cups for our lunch program. When we ran out of them, I bought those," and she pointed to the cheap plastic cups being passed around the tables.

"We don't have two dollars to spare."

Just down the street in Sodus, Reverend Ivory Simmons has the central office for CASH (Community Action Self-Help), a housing project that helps the rural poor build their own homes. CASH will get \$4,600 to hire a community organization worker.

Rev. Simmons is both soft spoken and hard nosed. Originally from Florida, he has made Wayne County his home since coming here with the NAACP.

In a quiet voice, he recalls his arrival in the county. "When we first got here, the real problem was housing. We had to live in shacks, really run down, and I decided then the first thing I would do would be to concentrate on better housing."

This personal dedication has paid off. In a short drive through the countryside, Rev. Simmons pointed out one project of houses that had just been started, another group of three houses built and already occupied by CASH families, and two more that had just been completed.

With Federal loans and their own labor as "sweat equity," the rural poor can get some decent housing through the CASH program.

Even further to the east in Wayne County, LaVerne Noble runs the Clyde Federal Credit Union. A busy man of varied talents, Noble has been a salesman, a carpenter and a farmer. He has been putting in a full day a week for years running the credit union — all of it unpaid.