

St. James Hospital Honors Employees

Hornell — Forty-eight St. James Mercy Hospital employees were honored at the 11th annual awards banquet May 16 at the Hornell Country Club during the observance of National Hospital Week.

Barbara Bohomey, employee health nurse with the personnel department, received the second annual "Employee of the Year" award. William Connors, associate administrator, read a citation noting "Barbara Bohomey is recognized for her contribution to the goals of the hospital. She serves with a dedication and the hospital and everyone who comes in contact with her is better because she works here."

Patricia Van Winkle, personnel department head, presented Mrs. Bohomey with a plaque, a duplicate of which will be hung in the "Court of Honor" in the hospital lobby.

The "Employee of the Year" is determined by a committee of seven employees, which bases its

choice on the candidates' contributions to the hospital's goals, individual attitude, loyalty, honesty, respect and cooperation.

Father Eugene Emo, chaplain, gave the invocation. Sister Mary Rene McNiff, administrator, welcomed the honored employees and their guests. Sister Mary Judith Heberle, a member of the board of directors, expressed the appreciation of the hospital to the employees for their loyalty. American Hospital Association award pins were presented to Sister Rene, and the associate administrators, Paul Shephard and William Connors.

The other honorees were presented pins marking their continuous service to the hospital, in five-year increments. Raymond Brzozowski, Margaret Freeland, Aileen Mahoney and Elizabeth Smith received 30-year pins. A 25-year pin went to Edna Sufin, and 20-year pins were presented to Betty Harder and Jean Parker.

Sister Mary Kruckow, RSM



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

Rural Ministry

We who live and work in rural areas suffer deeply from isolation, loneliness and neglect. In many instances we are the forgotten people of America and of the diocese. Isolation and loneliness: 60 percent of the inadequate public transportation for low income families exists in rural areas but only six percent is allotted by the federal government for rural. Neglect: 44 percent of the elderly poor reside in rural but receive only 18 percent Federal Assistance. Fifty-six percent of the population in the United States in medically underserved areas are in rural, while federal outlays for rural health service is at 24 percent. There are comparable figures for educationally deprived children and substandard housing. (Facts from government studies made in 1977 and 1978)

Our principal role is to bring the presence of the Church and the love of Christ to these people hungering for love and affection. If we did nothing else except to show them that someone cares, that would be more than sufficient reason for our ministry. However, our flexibility and availability means that we are "on call" 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Carrying on Christ's mission of service we feed the hungry, visit the imprisoned, comfort the sick and sorrowful. Christ did not mention providing transportation, but when there is only one hospital in the southwestern most part of the county, one physician to every 3100 people, six full-time dentists for the entire county (population 49,151) and no public transportation, the need to do so is great. The requests for food the last 10 days of the month is heartrending.

Without food pantries sponsored by churches and Human Development Committees and the Southern Tier Food Bank, we could not meet these requests. The dependency ratio (i.e., under 18 and over 65) for the county is 24 percent of the population; for New York State it is 12 percent. Fruit baskets at Christmas and Valentines Day and donated candy at Christmas and Easter bring unbelievable joy to the young and elderly. Working closely with agencies, we deliver food baskets during the holidays to those not reached by anyone else. During non-holiday time, we visit the sick and shut-ins in hospitals, nursing homes and their own homes. But with 524 square miles to cover this is frustrating. Some days we visit only three or four people.

By government definition, the Southern Tier of the Rochester diocese is Appalachia. Roads are impassable in the winter because of snow; in the spring, mud. People live in shacks and substandard housing. In the winter, the poor must decide: heat or food. Dental care is a luxury, not a necessity. Only because the Campaign for Human Development funded a Well Child Clinic do the children (birth to five years old) receive basic health care. The county seat and the only sub-station for Social Services and Food Stamps are in the southern part of the county.

Many days our hearts are rebellious at the injustices "we" suffer and crushed by the hunger visible in "our" children. And you? Remember, "as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me!"

Sister Mary Kruckow, RSM, is a staff member of the Tioga County Rural Ministry.



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