

Features

# Auction proceeds to assist Salvadoran refugees going home

By Lee Strong

Are you looking for some crystal candlesticks? An 87-piece English china service for 10? A shopping spree at Northfield Commons? Four tickets to *Can Can*? Drawing or tennis lessons? Or perhaps a weekend-cruise for four though the Thousand Islands would be nice.

These are among the approximately 200 items that will be up for bid at a March 5 benefit auction planned by the Rochester Sanctuary Committee. Funds raised through the auction, which will take place at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Rochester, will be used to assist Salvadoran refugees resettling in their homeland after spending as many as six years in Honduran refugee camps.

According to Sister Kathleen Weider, SSJ, chairwoman of the sanctuary committee, each Salvadoran refugee family needs approximately \$1,000 in support while resettling. The money is used to buy basic farming implements, seeds, housing materials, medical supplies and food until the family can raise its own. The funds are distributed by Diakonia, a ecumenical group in El Salvador designated by the refugees to handle the money and to make necessary purchases.

The Rochester event is part of the nationwide Going Home campaign, an Washington-based, interfaith effort created to provide moral and material support for Salvadoran refugees returning to El Salvador. According to estimates made by the Going Home Steering Committee, approximately 700,000 Salvadorans have fled to neighboring Central American countries because of the ongoing civil war in El Salvador. Of these refugees, an estimated 20,000 are living in Honduran camps.

The largest of the Honduran camps, Mesa Grande, held 12,000 refugees until October, 1987, when more than 4,000 Salvadorans returned to El Salvador. The Going Home campaign has provided \$75,000 in support for these refugees since September, 1987.

The Rochester Sanctuary Committee hopes that the auction will raise \$5,000 — enough money to help five families resettle, Sister Weider said. The money will be taken to El Salvador by a Going Home national delegation scheduled to leave the United States on March 11.

The sanctuary committee decided to hold the auction after hearing about the success a Kansas City group had experienced with a similar event last summer, Sister Weider ex-



Gail Mott of Pittsford displays an antique cabbage grinder along with a sampling of the many other items that will be up for bid March 5 in a benefit auction for the Rochester Sanctuary Committee. The group hopes to raise \$5,000 to resettle families in El Salvador.

plained. "We knew we were going to have a winter fund-raiser, and we were looking for something suitable for Rochester weather-wise," Sister Weider noted. "We were also looking for something a little different and unusual, to set (our fund-raising efforts) apart from other fund-raisers."

Sister Weider added that the size of the sanctuary network in the Rochester area offered potential for generating interest and support.

Committee members began soliciting donations in December. They first approached Rochester's seven sanctuary congregations —

Corpus Christi Church, Downtown United Presbyterian Church, the Religious Society of Friends, the House Church, Temple B'rith Kodesh, Lake Avenue Baptist Church and Parsells Avenue Community Church — for auction items, then began contacting outside groups and businesses.


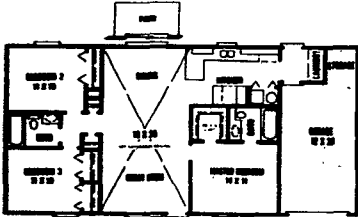
"The response was overwhelmingly positive," Sister Weider said. Most people contacted were willing to help, she noted, though a few did decline because of the political nature of the situation in El Salvador.

In addition to a standard auction, the fund-raising event will include a table of children's

items and silent auction tables containing items on which participants can make sealed bids. Refreshments will be served, and the Blue Suspenders will provide musical entertainment before and after the auction.

Auction items can be inspected from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 5, and bidding will begin at 7:30 p.m. A \$5 adult contribution, which can be applied to purchases, is requested for admission.

The Rochester Sanctuary Committee is still accepting donations for the auction. For information or to make donations, call Sister Weider at (716)232-7363.

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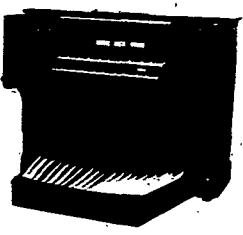
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