

Macedon couple 'caters' to needs of others

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

MACEDON — Hundreds of recent heart-attack survivors in the Rochester area — saved by people who know CPR — may have never heard of Jim and Janet Deisenroth.

Yet it was the Deisenroths, parishioners of St. Patrick's Church on Main Street, who helped launch the Rochester Rotary Club's "Save-A-Heart Program" in 1980.

According to Jim Deisenroth, the program helped increase the local survival rate of heart-attack victims from 3.6 percent to 36 percent between 1980 and 1985. The American Red Cross has now adopted the CPR program, through which hundreds of individuals are trained each year.

In addition to their efforts increasing the use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the Deisenroths have been active in other areas: they helped collect books for Rochester City School District and Catholic school students; delivered food to the Southern Tier during the 1972 flood; and held benefit dinners for various organizations at the party house they ran.

In honor of their civic achievements, the couple received this year's Rotary Award from the Rochester Rotary Club. The dinner was held at the club's headquarters, 120 E. Main St., on March 31.

The Deisenroths became involved in CPR almost by accident.

In 1980, Janet Deisenroth was reading a magazine when she came across an article on the procedure. A volunteer dispatcher with the Perinton Volunteer Ambulance Corps, she was struck by what she read.

What particularly helped the article



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor
Jim and Janet Deisenroth, parishioners at St. Patrick's Church in Macedon, open their hearts and their farm to many local charities.

hit home, she recalled, was that it came shortly after one of the couple's daughters — an ambulance technician at the time — called to say her ambulance corps lost two patients to cardiac arrest within 24 hours.

In both cases, their daughter said, the individuals might have survived had more people known CPR.

After his wife cited the article and asked what they might do, Jim Deisenroth began investigating the death rate from cardiac arrest in the Rochester area.

He was shocked to learn the low survival rate of heart-attack victims, and how many of those people might have lived had they received CPR in time.

"I thought about it for a while," Jim Deisenroth recalled. "(Then) I went to Rotary to see if we should be the catalyst for a massive CPR program."

Rotary members agreed to support the effort. But when he went to the

Red Cross and the Heart Association to learn how to address the problem, he was surprised when he was told, "The public's not interested in this."

Undaunted by this discouraging message, Jim Deisenroth set out to "interest" people in CPR. The couple organized a series of dinner meetings with civic and business leaders at the Hospitality House — the party house they operated in Penfield.

People listened. "It snowballed and snowballed," Deisenroth explained, noting that soon afterward companies started inviting him to talk about the procedure. Companies began to offer training sessions, as did various organizations and schools. Gradually, the life-saving method became an established part of the Rochester-area's health scene.

Although the CPR campaign brought the Deisenroths recent recognition, their involvement in such activities dates back to the 1940s.

Married Nov. 29, 1947, by 1955 the couple had four children and had opened the Hospitality House on Penfield Road, which they ran until 1986.

Making the Hospitality House successful — especially in its early years — involved hard work, much scrimping and long hours, the Deisenroths observed. In fact, the couple did not take a vacation the first 17 years they were married.

Long before opening the party house, they organized benefit dinners for Holy Angels Home in Rochester, a residential center for teenage girls. Once Hospitality House opened, the couple offered the facility at no cost — including meals — for numerous benefits.

In addition to Holy Angels Home, School of the Holy Childhood and a number of other community groups and organizations held functions at the Penfield party house.

Currently, the couple is involved with helping to provide books and clothing for students of Rochester's inner-city public and Catholic schools. The effort so far has furnished more than 4,000 books and tons of magazines to these students.

These efforts have continued since the Deisenroths "retired." The barn of their Macedon farm is filled with toys, games, clothing, medical supplies, books and magazines. They plan to donate these items to schools and agencies throughout the Rochester area.

Looking back at more than 40 years of helping others, Jim Deisenroth said he and his wife have never sought recognition for their efforts.

"We've been blessed," he said, "so we had a chance to do this."

Patients sought for study at University of Rochester

ROCHESTER — Researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center are looking for Alzheimer's patients who are in the early stages of the disease and do not have other medical complications to participate in simple musical listening tests.

The first test is administered in the patient's home or care facility and involves listening to music and making simple judgments about certain sound characteristics.

The second and third tests, performed at the Medical Center, involve recording brain activity while the patient evaluates musical stimuli. The patient will wear a special Electro-Cap that is used to obtain neural measurements. Each participant will receive a \$20 stipend and free parking and/or transportation to the Medical Center. Call Joann Centola, laboratory technician, at 716/275-4851.



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WELCOME HELP FOR CAREGIVERS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE VICTIMS

Of the 20,000 people in the Greater Rochester Area who have Alzheimer's disease or related dementias, the majority are cared for in their own homes or in the homes of family members. The demands on the caregiver are great.

Meeting the Need

The Alzheimer's Family Outreach Program was created to help families care for loved ones who have Alzheimer's disease or related dementias.

How It Works

The program begins with a visit to the home of the Alzheimer's patient by a team consisting of a social worker, a community health nurse and a therapeutic recreation specialist. The team works closely with the family to assess its specific needs and to develop an individualized home-care plan.

Services provided by the team include:

1. Information about the range of health, financial and social services available in the community.
2. Assistance in accessing available service options.
3. Ongoing case management to review changing needs and to make any necessary modifications in the care plans.
4. Help in preparing for nursing home placement if and when necessary.

If you need help in caring for a loved one or if you are a physician or other health care professional interested in utilizing the program please call (716) 274-7360 or write to:

Alzheimer's Family Outreach Program
Monroe Community Hospital
435 East Henrietta Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14620