

Honored volunteer has made up for late start

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

CANANDAIGUA — Ruth Craugh got a late start as a volunteer.

But the parishioner of Canandaigua's St. Mary Parish, 95 N. Main St., has more than made up for lost time.

In recognition of her volunteer service, Craugh was presented with the Antoinette Granger Award on Aug. 11. Bestowed by the Granger Homestead Society, the annual award is given to an outstanding woman volunteer living in Ontario County.

Craugh certainly earned that recognition. Since retiring in 1981 after 35 years as a secretary at Rochester's Stromberg-Carlson Corporation, she has served as: translator for the First Baptist Braille Group in Rochester; docent (tour guide) at the Granger Homestead; receptionist at the Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce's Visitor Center; treasurer and secretary for the board of directors of Canandaigua's F.F. Thompson Health System, Inc.; and administrator with Neighbor-to-Neighbor, a program helping to meet the emergency needs of Canandaigua-area residents.

In addition, she has knitted 25 to 30 mittens each year for the St. Vincent DePaul Society at St. Mary Parish.

Craugh, however, downplays her volunteer activities.

"My husband (Robert) was still working (at the Canandaigua National Bank) when I retired, so there was not a whole lot we could do," Craugh explained. "I was just looking for something to do to fill the time because I had led such a disciplined life."

Craugh's initial involvement in volunteering came as a translator for the Braille group. A friend had suggested she give translating a try, so Craugh enrolled in a course to get certified. After receiving her certification in 1982, her first effort was to translate Richard Hooker's *MASH*, a novel she was reading at the time.

That attempt was followed by other



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Ruth Craugh sits in her Canandaigua home with the Antoinette Granger Award she received for outstanding community service.

novels, cookbooks and even bus schedules. Craugh has also taken part in presentations about Helen Adams Keller — the U.S. writer and lecturer who was blind and deaf from infancy but learned to read and write — for the Canandaigua City School District and translated the "Our Father" for students at St. Mary School.

While continuing her Braille work, Craugh also became involved with other activities. "I can't say no," she explained.

Craugh is focusing much of her time of late with the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program — of which she is one of the three administrators.

The administrators are contacted about individuals or families who need emergency assistance, Craugh said. The administrators investigate each situation, and either try to match an agency that can help meet that need, or will provide financial assistance available to the program through donations and fundraising.

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor program helps people on a short-term basis pay bills for such things as utilities or taxes, or with recovering from such disasters as fires, theft, or medical emergencies.

Although her husband retired in 1986, Craugh has remained active in her volunteer work.

"It really has been a lot of fun, and I've met a lot of nice people that I wouldn't have otherwise," Craugh said. "So I'm glad I've done it all."

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