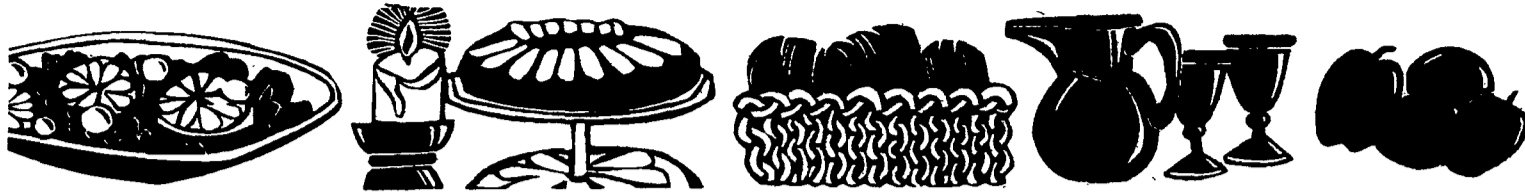


Fall Harvest CLEANING



Food cupboards rebound from thefts

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Despite a summer that saw repeated break-ins, food cupboards at St. Andrew's and St. Bridget's parishes are still in operation and apparently more secure from theft than they were before.

St. Andrew's Food Cupboard, 1125 North St., reopened Sept. 6, following a series of five break-ins that began in early August and virtually emptied the building of its donated food.

Margaret Oberst, chairwoman of the cupboard's board of directors, noted that fellow parishioner, Claude Beauchamp, of Matrix Security System, installed a security system at the cupboard for free after he learned of the break-ins.

She added that her landlord, Ralph Meleo, helped pay for the installation of two steel doors in the building, and has worked with her to secure better police protection for the cupboard.

"They have been just wonderful," she said of Beauchamp and Meleo, adding that the cupboard, which serves about 290 households each month, has suffered no break-ins since late August.

She added that many people who

learned of the cupboard's plight through the media sent in direly needed donations that have enabled the cupboard — more than half of whose clientele is children — to rebound from the break-ins.

"We definitely received a wonderful response," Oberst said.

Meanwhile, St. Bridget's Food Cupboard, located in a building next to the church at 175 St. Bridget's Drive, is apparently back on its feet following three break-ins — the last of which occurred in June.

Lucille Simpson, the cupboard's director, explained that she had installed some new locks on the building's doors, and bars on the building's windows to deter any more burglaries.

She added that she has confronted the men she believed broke into the cupboard. The men are among the cupboard's 2,000 beneficiaries every month.

"I said 'Why would you want to break into something that's helping you?'" she recalled.

Simpson had nothing but pity for the suspected burglars, she said, noting that she knew at least one of them had a drug problem.

"I told him, 'When you're sick like that, go get help,'" she recalled.

Simpson attributed the neighbor-

hood's drug and crime problems to a lack of job and recreational opportunities in the area. She added that she hopes to expand the food cupboard's daily program and possibly establish some sort of social center where young people and adults can gather.

"I really would like to get into something to get these teenagers off the streets," she said. "Even some of the drug-dealers, I'll speak to, and they listen."

Many of the hungry people who come to her door are unemployed, or simply can find no other place to congregate, she said. To illustrate her point, she noted that several children regularly came to the cupboard this summer, and would help her with some of her tasks, work that she would reward by giving them food packages each Friday.

"I'd say, 'See, that's your pay for helping me out,' and they'd like that," she concluded.

EDITORS' NOTE — Donations to St. Andrew's should be made to St. Andrew's Food Cupboard, c/o St. Andrew's Church, 923 Portland Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14621.

Donations to St. Bridget's should be made to St. Bridget's Food Cupboard, 165 St. Bridget's Drive, Rochester, N.Y. 14605.

Parish women prepare meals

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

FAIRPORT — Several years ago, Ann H. Marron was reading the *Catholic Courier* when she came across an advertisement placed by St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, a Catholic Worker shelter located at 402 South Ave. in Rochester.

Marron recalled that the house was seeking parish volunteers to help in its free-meals program.

"I answered that," remembered Marron, a parishioner at St. John of Rochester, 18 Wickford Way. "I just wanted to do something for the poor and the homeless out of the generosity of my heart."

Marron also decided to tap into the generosity of her fellow parishioners and called more than 20 women, asking them to help her cook and serve a meal once a month for the shelter.

Since then, women from the parish have kept up the tradition started by Marron, according to Dottie Kunz, who currently coordinates the volunteers. Each woman prepares food for the shelter in her own home, she said.

On the last Wednesday of every month, three or four of the women volunteers collect such dishes as chicken or beef stew or goulash from the rest of the volunteers and take them to St. Joseph's where they prepare the meals and serve them to the house's guests.

About 100 people — divided into two sittings — enjoy the meals prepared by the women, Kunz said.

"They inhale the food," she said of the guests. "We start at 11:30 a.m. and some of them are finished by 11:35."

Kunz pointed out that by overseeing food preparation and service, the women allow St. Joseph's staff some free time to sit down and talk to their guests. At the same time, these St. John's parishioners receive an intangible reward for the work they put into preparing the meals, Kunz commented.

"The 'thank you's' you receive far outweigh any effort that we make," she remarked.


And the guests aren't the only ones feeling gratitude toward the women.

"We couldn't do things without the help of our volunteers," commented Eric LeCompte, a staff member.

According to LeCompte, St. John's is one of several churches and groups that help out in meal preparation and serving. Such Catholic parishes as St. John the Evangelist, Greece, St. Paul's, Webster, and Immaculate Conception in Rochester do their part for the meal program, he said.

Students from Nazareth College and McQuaid Jesuit High School, and members of several Protestant churches and other organizations donate their time and effort as well, LeCompte added.

EDITORS' NOTE — LeCompte noted that the shelter could use more volunteers, and would particularly welcome parishes' involvement. For information on volunteer opportunities, call 716/232-3262.



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