

# FEATURE

## 'Heat's On' for seniors thanks to union project

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

For the past few winters, Charles DiMartino has been able to rest a little easier no matter how bad the weather was outside.

The St. Theodore's parishioner has been a beneficiary of the free Handicapped and Elderly Assistance To Service Our Neighbors Program — also known by the acronym "Heat's On." The program is offered by Local Union No. 13, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada.

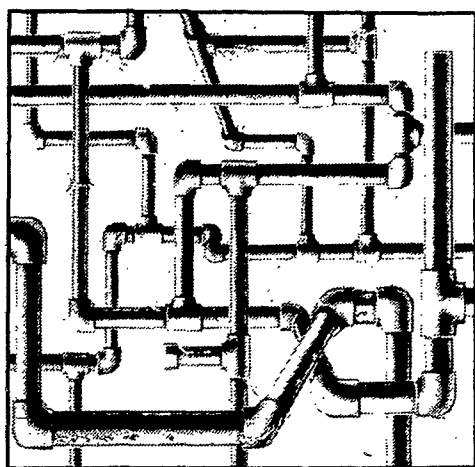
This winter will mark the ninth year in which union members will go out on one Saturday to inspect and make minor repairs to the furnaces and water heaters of low-income elderly and handicapped homeowners in Rochester and some of its surrounding suburbs.

The volunteers this year will be making their visits Saturday, Oct. 7.

"They do a good job of inspecting," DiMartino said. "It's a good program."

The two-men teams who have come into DiMartino's home — and those of other Rochesterians — clean or replace furnace filters, check the pilot lights, and examine the flues from furnaces and water heaters. In some homes, they also install smoke detectors and, when major repairs are needed, alert homeowners about problems and ways of obtaining assistance.

"We all make a good living, so we figure it's a good way to give to the community," noted Gordy Gardner, who is marking his third year as chairman of the



program. "We're helping the community out."

This Saturday, some 80 union members will visit approximately 100 homes, Gardner reported. Last year, they helped 75 homeowners. Most of the people they visit are referred to the union program through churches and area social service agencies. Among the Catholic parishes working with the program this year are Church of the Annunciation, St. Ambrose, St. Andrew's, St. Boniface, and St. John the Evangelist on Humbolt Street.

In most of the homes, volunteers find just minor problems, Gardner said. But, he noted, "We find one or two horror stories a year."

Those horror stories involve such problems as blocked flues or chimneys, or furnaces that have become unsafe.

Community programs exist to help pay for major repairs, Gardner noted. Those repairs are not made by the volunteers in the Heat's On program.

The cost of minor repairs volunteers make through the Heat's On program is

paid through a fund created by the union and the organization representing the companies that employs the union plumbers and pipe fitters, the Mechanical Contractors Association. The employers' group also provides company vehicles for the volunteers to get to the homes.

The program has gradually grown over the years, Gardner said, observing, "People hear about it and call up and ask how they can get their furnaces inspected."

The list of homes to visit this year has already been completed, but Gardner said people can call the union to see

about getting themselves or someone they know on the list for 1996.

Gardner observed that people have been grateful for the service.

"We've had people bake cookies and send them down to us at the union hall," Gardner said.

DiMartino, for one, is appreciative of the assistance he has received.

"I think they were a big help to us," DiMartino said. "We feel better after they've come down."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For information about Heat's On, call the union at 338-2360.

## Home Improvement

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### Chase announces 26 grants to aid community organizations

The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A., has awarded 26 grants totaling \$24,690 to Rochester-area organizations through the bank's 1995 Neighborhood Grants Program.

Among the grant recipients are: the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation for the Chase Senior Emergency Repair program for seniors in Wayne and Ontario counties; Corpus Christi Center for a meal program for women,

repair of three low income housing units and dental equipment; Holy Cross School to fund drug and alcohol education programs; Rogers House for an emergency housing fund; and the Greater Rochester Community of Churches for refugee resettlement.

The Neighborhood Grants Program is intended to address the needs of "grass roots" organizations working on community projects.

### Newark youth group schedules day of services for seniors

NEWARK — The youth group at St. Michael's Church will perform chores for Newark-area senior citizens on Make a Difference Day, set for Saturday, Oct. 28.

The group is offering to perform such duties as raking, mowing, trimming, edging, branch clearing, window cleaning and replacement, furniture moving, gardening, planting and shrub removal. Participants will work from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

and then be recognized at 5:15 p.m. Mass at St. Michael's. The day will conclude with a dinner and dance in the church hall.

Those who are interested in receiving the youth group's services or who know of others who would be interested are asked to call Debi Housel at 315/331-6753. Additional volunteer workers are also welcome.



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