

What is the Christmas Appeal?

It is a cooperative effort of the *Catholic Courier* and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester to raise funds for people in desperate financial crisis.

For the past 28 years, the appeal has enabled the Catholic community to help thousands of people in 12 counties to help meet life's basic needs. Christmas Appeal funds have been there for them when no other sources of aid were available.

Who benefits from it?

The Christmas Appeal helps individuals and families in short-term financial crises. These are people who have no financial resources and are either awaiting or are ineligible for assistance through other sources.

How does it work?

Appeal proceeds are allocated to the emergency funds of the following diocesan agencies: Catholic Family Center; Finger Lakes Social Ministry; Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier; Catholic Charities of Livingston County outreach; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation; and diocesan Urban Services.

PLEASE USE MY DONATION TO HELP A NEIGHBOR IN NEED

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

MAIL CHECK

(payable to "Christmas Appeal")

and this coupon to:

Christmas Appeal
c/o Catholic Courier
PO Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624

Christmas Appeal

Mother, daughter sleep easier thanks to aid

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

Rose (not her real name) didn't know what to do.

She had come to Rochester from South Carolina in August 1997 with her 4-year-old daughter, who has Down syndrome, to visit a friend. She discovered she liked the city and decided to stay.

By October, she was no longer able to stay with the friend, so she found an apartment. But with little money, and no job yet, she could not pay for some needed items for the apartment — including mattresses for the bed frames she had bought. "We were sleeping on the floor," Rose said.

So while trying to find a job and some job training, and attempting to enroll her daughter in a child-care program suitable for developmentally disabled children, Rose began searching for some short-term help as her money began to run out.

Her initial efforts resulted only in frustration.

"Every time I called someone, they referred me to someone else," Rose said.

She was eventually referred to the Catholic Family Center. But she hesitated to call, out of fear of being rejected again.

Finally, she did call, and was put in touch with Bobbi McGarrity, the center's emergency services provider.

"She made the appointment for me to come in to talk with her the next day," Rose said.

McGarrity met with her, Rose said,

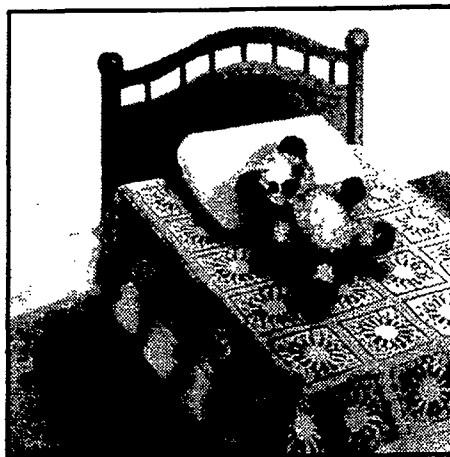


Illustration by Linda Rivers

gave her a job application, discussed job training programs, and told her to check with some agencies that might have mattresses for sale. Rose found two mattresses and called McGarrity.

"Two or three days later, we got the mattresses," Rose marvelled. "She even delivered them. She drove them here on her car."

"I appreciate it so much," Rose added, "because out of all the organizations I went to ... they were the only ones who helped."

Rose and her daughter have beds to sleep on thanks to McGarrity — and Christmas Appeal funds.

McGarrity uses Appeal monies to meet emergency needs that, like those of Rose and her daughter, cannot be met through other means.

"(Appeal funds) are really nice to have for unique situations that we can't pull

money for from other funds," McGarrity observed.

Begun in 1969 as a joint effort of diocesan Catholic Charities and the *Catholic Courier*, the Christmas Appeal provides a pool of money that helps people in emergency situations who can't find help elsewhere, or who can't wait for that help to begin. Over the years, workers at Catholic Charities the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation and diocesan Urban Services have used the fund to help provide everything from boots for children to mid-winter furnace repairs.

McGarrity, for example, noted that she has used Appeal monies to help people buy needed medications, groceries and bus passes so they can get to work.

At the same time, Appeal funds often provide the initial contact with individuals, who are then offered help to overcome other problems in their lives.

"We're trying to help turn away for a Band-Aid approach to social service," McGarrity explained. "We're working more long-term with them."

Thus she is helping people to get into treatment programs, or, as in the case of Rose, find needed education or training.

Rose, for one, is hoping to have her daughter soon enrolled in a special program, is waiting to hear news on a job for which she applied and intends to begin taking business classes in January.

She also has plans for the Christmas Appeal.

"Once I get on my feet, I plan to start donating," she declared.

Neediest Cases

Monies collected during the *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal aid people throughout the year, but especially at Christmas. The following are some of the people families who have been aided with Christmas Appeal funds.

★ A couple in their early 40s had sold all their material possessions to cover medical costs resulting from the wife's treatment for cancer. The father lost his job as a result of having to care for the 6- and 9-year-old children. They needed assistance to cover back rent and prevent eviction. Catholic Charities is also looking into reclaiming the wife's wedding band, which was sold to cover medical costs.

★ A divorced woman in her 40s was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. She also has a history of epileptic seizures.

Funds were provided to install an emergency phone line in her home.

★ A 30-year-old physically challenged woman was forced to leave her home as it did not meet the city housing codes. She did not have enough funds to move to a new apartment, and her security deposit from her previous landlord had not been returned. The agency was able to help her with the first month's rent for a newer, more suitable handicap-accessible residence, and mediate with the new landlord regarding the security deposit.

★ A single mother of two small children was forced to leave her residence because of the landlord's failure to meet housing codes. The family was staying at the homeless shelter, and needed enough money to cover the first month's rent for their new home. They were also assisted with food and clothing, and finding af-

fordable housing.

★ A senior citizen was living in a home with broken windows and a broken water heater. Funds were provided to assist toward a water heater. Other agencies were contacted to help with home repairs.

★ A single mother of four, living in Mt. Morris, needed \$52.85 for gas to get back and forth to a new job in Rochester until her first paycheck arrived.

★ A 6-year-old having problems in school due to dyslexia needed a special eye test that was not covered by medical insurance. \$100 was used to cover the balance of the cost of the eye test.

★ A father, mother and three children live in a mobile home in need of much repair. The father works full-time; the mother is disabled. Materials for repairs were purchased for \$234, and the father and a friend did the work.

The Following Businesses and Organizations
Join the Staff of The Catholic Courier in Wishing You

Happy Thanksgiving

Wesley Construction
7340 Victor Mendon Road
Victor, NY
716-654-8200

Adrian Jules Custom Tailors
1392 East Ridge Road
Rochester, NY
716-342-7160

Cook Iron Store
128 St. Paul & Andrew St. • Rochester
716-235-4240
Supplier to Contractors and Industry

All-Around Travel
385 Buell Road
Rochester, NY
716-436-1701

Zweigles
651 Plymouth Avenue North
Rochester, NY
716-546-1740

Schantz Homes Inc.
4029 St. Paul Boulevard
Rochester, NY
716-342-2240

Hart Monument
2301 Dewey Avenue
Rochester, NY
716-865-6746

Allstate Insurance
484 Brooks Avenue • Rochester
716-235-4240
You're in good hands with
Patricia Goode and Allstate

Qualtech Reprographics Inc.
Gerald Giglio
111 Humboldt St., Rochester, NY
716-654-8070

Express Press
1279 Chili Avenue
Rochester, NY
716-235-8775