

Happy Thanksgiving!



Aid program turns 30

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

EDITORS' NOTE: For the past 30 years the Catholic Courier and diocesan Catholic Charities have co-sponsored the Christmas Appeal. The agencies of Catholic Charities draw from appeal funds year-round to address emergency needs of thousands of people — including the woman featured here:

Linda Murph had seen better days. She had met her husband in Rochester after moving here from Washington, D.C. They had three children. She earned her associate's degree in criminal justice and underwent training for the Police Academy.

Then things took a turn for the worse. And then another and another. Her drug use escalated. She and her husband suf-

fered marriage difficulties. They divorced. He was given custody of the children. In February she found herself homeless.

She had nowhere to go.

But Catholic Charities workers were standing by, with open arms and Christmas Appeal money to assist with this and a myriad of other clients' emergencies.

"I found them last February, when I needed everything — including encouragement," said Murph, 38. "I needed practically everything. Somebody to actually hear my cries. I think I was blessed with having counseling not about being beat down, but uplifting, mature conversations. ... I don't need to be around people who are not about being real professionals. The people here are real professionals."

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Clockwise from top left: Schoolteacher, students in Phnom Penh children's center; women learn hairdressing at Catholic-run school; children atop scrap heap in slum; Ex-Khmer Rouge slave shows museum photo of Khmer Rouge murder victim.

Cambodians work to build future

EDITORS' NOTE: From Oct. 23 to Nov. 7, Catholic Courier staff writer Rob Cullivan toured Thailand and Cambodia as part of an international group of journalists (see box, Page 10). The trip was organized in part by the International Catholic Union of the Press. This is the first of two stories on his experiences.

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

To many people in this country, "Cambodia" may only evoke horror, defeat and genocide — memories of the 1970s they might prefer to forget. But Cambodians — most of whom are not old enough to have remembered Ronald Reagan, much less Richard Nixon, being U.S. president, — do not have the luxury of forgetting the past. They live with it every day.

According to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, a quasi-gov-

ernmental de-mining agency, for example, western Cambodia is littered with an estimated 10 million land mines, most left by the communist Khmer Rouge as they fled Vietnam's invading army in the late 1970s. Walk through Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, and you'll often see land-mine victims — including children — without legs, arms or eyes, begging for tourists' dollars.

Meanwhile, in eastern Cambodia, a half-million ton of unexploded bombs dropped by the United States in the early 1970s still sit in the ground, the center reports. Agency experts note that children and farmers are regularly injured by this lethal legacy, sometimes simply because they think they can use the unexploded devices to blow up fish to eat.

And then there's poverty. Most Cambodians live on less than a dollar a day and struggle to survive in a nation short of doctors, teachers and other intellectuals, many of whom were killed under

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