

Christmas Appeal

Agencies give blankets, scarves and dignity

What is the Christmas Appeal?

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

For the past 30 years, the Christmas 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; Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes; Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier; Catholic Charities of Livingston County outreach; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation; and diocesan Urban Services.

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(circle one) _____

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and this coupon to:
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Rochester, NY 14624

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

The weather outside can be frightful, but at least two Catholic agencies have helped people bundle up against the cold with funds from the *Catholic Courier*/Christmas Appeal.

Recently, for example, the Wayne County Regional Hispanic Ministry in Newark, provided blankets for two Hispanic migrant families, according to Father Jesus Flores, a Mexican priest currently serving as interim director of the Diocese of Rochester's Office of the Spanish Apostolate. He noted that the two families, a total of 12 people, live in a trailer home that cannot be heated well enough to keep everyone warm.

"They needed a lot of blankets," he said, pointing out that the Newark office paid for the blankets — along with food for the families — with funds from the Appeal.

Keeping people warm was also the object of Sister Barbara Kuhn, SSJ, director of St. Peter's Kitchen, an outreach ministry of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Rochester. The kitchen feeds between 130 and 200 people every weekday, and provides them clothing as well on Saturdays.

Many of the kitchen's clients are grandparents, aunts, uncles and godparents who bring children they are raising because the kids' parents are not around to do so, she said. Others are homeless people, and some are poor people who have no cooking facilities in their apartments, she said. Last year, she noticed that many guests were wearing hand-me-down jackets and needed scarves and gloves to get through the winter.

As Christmas approached last year, Sister Kuhn used Christmas Appeal funds to buy new socks and material to make scarves for the kitchen's guests. Sister Kuhn herself made most of the 180 scarves she gave away on Christmas Day during a dinner at the kitchen. She said the guests were pleased with the scarves, especially because her handmade ones were quite big.

"They commented on the length of (the scarves) because they could put them around their head as well as their neck,"



Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

she said of the guests. "I found them appreciative people."

She added that this year she plans to give away towels, wash cloths and soap, small items that can make a big difference in the lives of people on low incomes.

"I just like to raise their standards and human dignity a little bit," she said.

People in need



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Christmas Appeal funds are available year-round to people in need. The cases below are typical of those who received funds this past year.

★ When school started this year, Laurie's family was given \$75 for school supplies and a new back-to-school outfit for the 12-year-old. Her mother is a person with disabilities and receives limited Social Security benefits.

★ A car seat was purchased with \$44.99 for Catholic Charities Community & Residential Services case managers who use their own vehicles to transport clients and their children to appointments and outings.

★ Appeal funds paid for a \$39.25 round-trip ticket to Buffalo, to take the year-old son of a woman who was incarcerated to his grandmother. The two had been living with the woman's sister Rosie, who is 27 and mentally challenged, and not able to care for Jimmy.

★ During January, Catholic Charities of Livingston County used \$203.59 for prescriptions for people with no health insurance coverage. Dan, 60 years old, for example, was being released from the hospital and in need of heart medication. He had lost his job due to health reasons and therefore had no insurance. His wife works but has no insurance and they have two children. At this time they are waiting for Medicaid coverage. The agency paid for two weeks of medication.

★ Catholic Charities of Livingston County paid \$48 for a prescription for 10-year-old Katie, whose mom was out of work for two weeks with the flu. She works strictly on commission, so she

had no income for the two weeks. The agency also referred the mother to Child Health Plus, a state program that could provide coverage for Katie in the future.

★ The Christmas Appeal provided \$77.76 to buy two new tires and have them balanced for Tom, who is disabled, and his family. His wife works full-time and they have a 14-year-old son. They barely make ends meet each month.

★ Kerry, the single mother of a 2-year-old, was given \$37.97 to help buy a pair of black sneakers for a new job and gas money to get to work until she received her first paycheck.

★ Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation replaced a hazardous porch, cleaned and re-installed gutters for an 81-year-old retired schoolteacher and her husband, 83, who had Parkinson's Disease and is blind. The gutters were so filled with leaves that the kitchen ceiling had been leaking.

Courier Classifieds

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Announcements

ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

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