

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

Church, state offer elderly assistance

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

A host of resources are available for seniors throughout the Diocese of Rochester should they find themselves in financial difficulty or facing other problems. Both Diocesan Catholic Charities and New York State offer help through the following agencies and programs:

Catholic Charities operates offices throughout the diocese. Seniors can contact these offices for both information on services they provide or to be referred to related agencies and programs. The agencies and their contact numbers are:

- **Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes**, which serves Yates, Ontario, Wayne, Seneca and Cayuga counties, can be reached at its main office in Geneva by calling 315/789-2686 or in Auburn at 315/252-0018.

- **Catholic Charities of Livingston County** can be reached at 716/658-4466.

- **Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier**, which serves Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins and Tioga counties, can be reached at its main office in Elmira at 607/734-9784; at its Steuben office at 607/776-8085; or at its Tompkins/Tioga office at 607/272-5062 or 607/687-8606.

- **Catholic Family Center** of Rochester maintains an Elder Services Department that can be reached at 716/262-7050, ext. 7060. **Elder Services** oversees the following programs for seniors:

1. **Eldersource**: A collaborative effort of CFC and LIFESPAN, a Rochester-based agency. Eldersource provides assistance to seniors in identifying the services they need, including financial and medical. Ad-



ditionally, by calling its number at 716/325-2800, seniors can be referred to other agencies that provide services. (A related story is on facing page.)

2. The **Caregiver Resource Center** provides information, support, individual case management and educational seminars for caregivers of the elderly.

3. **Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program** or **EISEP**, provides nonmedical support services to frail seniors, including case management, housekeeping and chores, and homemaker/personal care. Depending on an individual's monthly income, services may be provided free or on a shared cost basis.

4. **Elder Counseling** provides comprehensive counseling including marriage, personal, family, bereavement and substance abuse issues to people over age 60 and their families. Donations are requested.

5. **Project Care** neighborhood volunteers

assist their elderly neighbors with non-medical support services.

6. **Senior Centers**: Transportation is available to Young at Heart, Bethany Presbyterian Church, 3000 Dewey Ave., and Just Friends, 800 Carter St., both in Rochester. People 60 or older can get a meal, recreate, socialize, exercise and receive health screenings and casework. Donations are requested.

7. **Support To Aged Residents** or **STAR** provides such nonmedical home support to frail elders as grocery shopping, transportation, friendly visits, essential errands and banking. Donations are requested.

In addition, various types of help are promoted by the **New York State Office of the Aging**. Seniors should call their area's department of social services or local office for the aging to obtain information on the following services, or call phone numbers provided for specific services:

- **Emergency Assistance for Adults** or **EAA** provides help in such hardship situations as replacing lost, stolen or not-received Social Security checks or providing funds to cover food needs or to prevent eviction or utility shut-off.

- **Senior Citizen Tax Exemption**: The local tax assessor's office can assist in determining eligibility for senior citizen property tax exemptions. Other exemptions are available for veterans or people who pay a disproportionate amount of tax in relation to their income.

- **Balance Billing**: In New York State, a physician who doesn't accept Medicare assignments cannot charge more than 5 percent above the Medicare-approved amount for covered service. This limit does not apply to home or office visits. Contact your local office for aging and ask about its Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program or HICAP. Counselors with HICAP can answer questions about private health insurance. Call 1-800-333-4114.

- **Medicare, Medicaid**: Both federally funded health insurance programs offer a variety of breaks to people with low incomes. Ask your local office for the aging for more information.

- **Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage** or **EPIC** helps older New Yorkers who do not have adequate insurance for prescription drugs and who are not eligible for Medicaid. For information, call the EPIC Help Line at 1-800-332-3742.

- **Home Energy Assistance Program** or

Facts about food stamps

If there's one federal program of which eligible people fail to avail themselves, it's the Food Stamp Program, according to social services experts. Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food Stamp Program is designed to help people on low incomes buy the food they need for good health.

According to Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, eligibility guidelines for food stamps changed last fall, and more people are now eligible than previously. For more information, call 315/789-2686 or toll free at 877/777-2686, or call your county's social services office.

The Nutrition Outreach Project of the YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County (716/325-1440) has published the following list of "10 Facts You Need To Know About Food Stamps."

1. You can own your own home and get food stamps.

2. You can own your own car and get food stamps.

3. No lien is placed on your car or home by the food stamp office.

4. Households are allowed to have up to \$2,000 in bank accounts, stocks, bonds, etc., and up to \$3,000 if a household member is 60 or older.

5. You don't need a permanent address or cooking facilities to get food stamps.

6. You don't have to pay for food stamps.

7. There are no age limits, and you don't have to be disabled to get food stamps.

8. It isn't necessary to be receiving government assistance in order to get food stamps.

9. People in emergency situations often get food stamps in five days.

More information on food stamps is available by visiting the Web page <http://fns1.usda.gov/isp/menu/apps/facts.htm>.

HEAP provides cash to help pay heating bills for low-income individuals and families. Applicants over 60 should contact their local office for the aging. You can begin applying for HEAP in November of each year. Grants are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.

On that note, the American Red Cross operates utilities assistance programs with utilities throughout the state. Contact your local Red Cross for more information.

Further information on these programs may be found by visiting the New York State Office for the Aging Web page <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/findhelp/guide/guide10.htm>.

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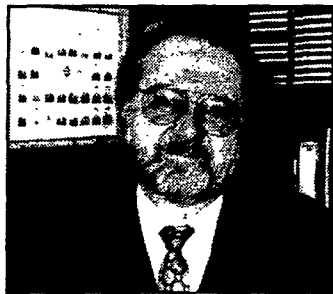
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Thoughts to Consider



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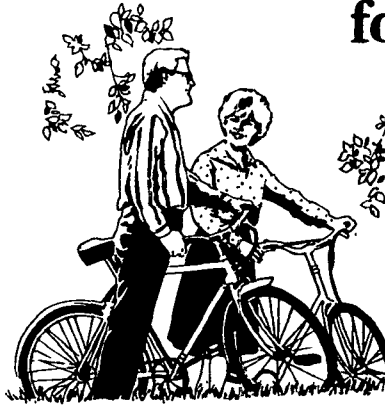
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