

Christmas Appeal

Appeal

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Neither has she scrimped on her efforts in the catering field. She's had some high-profile clients including the 1995 Ryder Cup, and Mayor William Johnson, whose birthday party she catered this year.

Yet, she acknowledged, "I'm not going to be in a fast-paced kitchen anymore."

"I'm not going to lie," she said. "I'm still very depressed. But my faith is restored. My faith in my country."

Gordon, 53, spent two months in acute and rehabilitative care at two hospitals last year. She said she had nowhere to go when she got out because she had been unable to keep her apartment while in the hospital. Living with family wasn't an option. So she went to live with a friend, a teacher and yoga practitioner.

"I couldn't get well there either," she said, although both were heartbroken when she left. Living there had given her little time to herself, alone, to concentrate on healing.

"I cried, I was feeling very suicidal," she said. "The feelings were getting so overwhelming. I didn't know what to do."

"I wanted to be alone where I could pray, live quiet," she said. "Maybe I could get well soon."

She said Life Line, a referral hotline run by the Health Association, gave her the number for Corpus Christi Center, now called the Mercy Outreach Center, where she kept hearing about a woman named Bobbi McGarrity, senior case manager at Catholic Family Center.

"They said, 'go talk to Bobbi and see if she can do anything to help you,'" Gordon recalled. "I am a proud person, be-



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Phyllis Gordon works on her gingerbread house at TILC Ministries in Rochester; the house will be on display at the George Eastman House through Dec. 16.

cause I've always worked. It was just embarrassing to me." But she decided to try.

"I walked in to see her, I'm not just saying it, I can't even describe to you how she is, one of the most caring," she said. "They go through this all day with crybaby stories. Here I was just depressed, crying, feeling weak all the time."

In September McGarrity not only helped her find her own home, an affordable apartment, but also helped her with some necessary purchases. The *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal contributed \$75 toward household items and \$50 for food. She receives military pension money from her ex-husband, but it only goes so far, Gordon explained. She admits "insufferable pride" kept her

from seeking help earlier. And she wants Catholic Family Center to know what a valuable person McGarrity is.

"Not only me, I saw the way she treated everybody who came," Gordon said of McGarrity.

"I don't want to be ashamed. I am not ashamed. These are life crises we go through. And if we didn't have people to help us ... You can't depend on family and friends sometimes. I want to say thank you for the help I received. Not only the Catholic Family Center, it's what's coming from the people in our community."

Gordon's gingerbread house will be on display with others at the George Eastman House, 900 East Ave., Rochester, through Dec. 16.



Caseworkers from Catholic Charities agencies submitted examples, including the following, of how Christmas Appeal funds are used year-round:

★ A woman in her 80s who lived on a fixed income had no resources to buy a new freezer, nor did her family members. She had gone with-

out one for several weeks and could not store food properly. Catholic Family Center provided \$159.99 to help her buy a freezer.

★ A 43-year-old homeless veteran was referred by a shelter for medicine for his heart condition and high blood pressure. Catholic Family Center provided \$70.98 for the medicine, intended to help stabilize his health. The man had no other resources, and was working with case managers at the shelter to obtain health

insurance and get his life in order.

★ A young, single mother of three children became stranded in Rochester. Traveling with a U-Haul, she had come to live with family, but the arrangements were not working out. Catholic Family Center provided \$45 for gas so that she and the children could return to Ohio in time for the new school season.

★ A young, single 34-year-old mother with children ages 3, 9 and 11 faced a dilemma when her refrigerator broke down. She had no money for even an estimate of repair costs, and her food spoiled. Catholic Family Center spent \$55 to obtain the estimate and provided a grocery voucher. The Department of Social Services paid for repairs.

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 27 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, 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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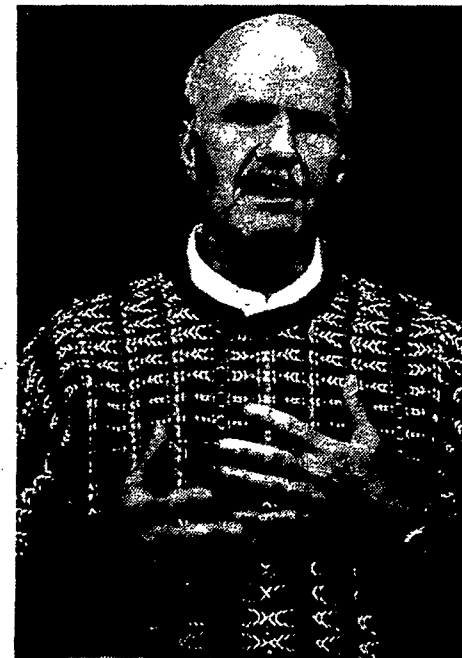
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Dining Guide

AWAKEN THE DIVINE WITHIN



Dr. Wayne Dyer
Saturday, November 24
1:00-5:00 p.m.
WXXI-TV 21 (cable 11)

1:00 p.m.
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2:15 p.m.
10 Secrets for Successful and Inner Peace



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