

Christmas Appeal

Appeal assists people low on options

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

When a 31-year-old single mother became ill and lost work and wages, the Samaritan Center of Elmira provided \$425 for rent for her and her daughter, 6, who risked eviction.

When a young working mom had to move — her landlord refused to correct violations in her apartment and also had sprayed rodent repellent when her infant was in the home — Catholic Family Center provided \$325 for a security deposit and first month's rent in a new home.

Many times, the *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal benefits those who feel there's nowhere else to turn. These examples, as well as smaller allocations for such basic items as work shoes, are among hundreds of cases handled throughout the year.

Since February, Nancy Annibale, case-worker for Cayuga County's branch of Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, has distributed Christmas Appeal funds to 30 families, mostly in allotments of \$25 to \$50.

"One of the things I hear a lot is, we were able to help them when they weren't able to get the help somewhere else," Annibale said. "I've heard that many, many times from people."

She even gets that reaction for a gesture as seemingly simple as allotting gas money for work or appointments. "They'll say, 'If you hadn't done that, what would I have done?'" Annibale remarked.

Annibale said that Christmas Appeal funds in Cayuga County have also gone toward purchasing prescriptions; a used refrigerator; supplies for babies; and a wait-



ress uniform. The uniform's cost was \$32 — not an exorbitant amount to some people, but Annibale noted that the recipient "couldn't have started her job without it."

Those who seek Christmas Appeal assistance, Annibale said, have included single mothers; men or women working one or two jobs but who still can't make ends meet; and people who are awaiting financial assistance from other sources, such as government programs or child support.

"All they need is that bridge for a month, a month and a half," said Laurie Trojnor, director of Catholic Charities' Cayuga office.

Mercy Sister Nancy O'Brien, director of rural outreach for Catholic Charities of Livingston County, said the Christmas Appeal has helped people in her area who don't have medical insurance; those who have insurance but can't afford the co-payments; who need money for home repairs; or who need money for car insurance, car repairs or fuel. "Those are probably the main things over the last few months," Sister O'Brien said.

Sister O'Brien noted that the Christmas Appeal, unlike many other forms of charitable assistance, doesn't require recipients to go through extensive red tape.

"Not being a government agency, we

don't have restrictions if they don't fit (a set of criteria)," Sister O'Brien said.

Annibale added that the Christmas Appeal also doesn't impose restrictions regarding the recipients' personal lives. "If you tell a person they're living bad, they're going to say 'I'm bad' and not find strengths," she commented. "You have to find the strengths in the family. You can't say what's wrong with them, you have to say what's right with them."

"For the most part, everybody's trying," Trojnor said. "They don't want to call for assistance, but things will get a lot worse if they don't."

Trojnor and Annibale said they strive to go a step or two beyond allotting Christmas Appeal funds. They refer recipients to other organizations and programs, and offer practical advice toward better money management. "It's more that follow-up — how are you going to pay (your bills) the next month?" Trojnor remarked.

Every once in a while, Sister O'Brien said, she hears from people who have turned the corner financially, but haven't forgotten how the Christmas Appeal helped them. One such person recently wrote to Sister O'Brien, recalling how Christmas Appeal funds provided Christmas gifts for her family last year.

"Her children had said to her, 'Oh Mommy, we're going to have Christmas after all,'" Sister O'Brien said.

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 32 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; Catholic Charities Community Services; 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

Come and visit our beautiful South 45 garden section, a garden-like setting of two, three and four grave lots including a raised-lawn crypt area highlighted by a bronze statue of Christ fallen under his cross

MONTHLY MEMORIAL MASS
Open to the Public - 8:30 am
Third Saturday Each Month

November through April All Souls Chapel
May through October All Saints Mausoleum Chapel

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP FOLLOWING MASS
9:30 am till 10:30 am
Cemetery Office Building

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
2461 Lake Avenue Rochester, NY • 716-458-4110 • www.holysepulchre.org

MISSION NEWS

In a slum in Nairobi in Kenya, some 50,000 street children between the ages of 6 and 16 live in holes in the ground; their roof: a sheet of plastic. Lay catechists in the area are trying to change all that. With help through the Propagation of the Faith, they have opened a house and school for these youngsters, providing them with food and safety — and through their loving witness, revealing the light of Christ to the darkness of their world.

This Christmas, won't you offer help to those in the Missions who, through their words and actions, reveal Christ's love and peace to the suffering poor?

The Society for the **THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH**

... all of us committed to the worldwide mission of Jesus

Please mail coupon to: Fr. Robert C. Bradler,
1150 Buffalo Rd., Dept. C, Rochester, NY 14624

For the Church in the Missions today, I enclose...

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 \$_____ (other)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please remember The Society for the Propagation of the Faith when writing or changing your will.