

—Christmas Appeal—

Funds assist disabled man

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

SPENCERPORT — Randy Humble spends much of his time in his living-room chair, a cane on one side and numerous bottles of medication on the other.

"See what I take every day? And I'm still in pain all day," he said.

This lifestyle arrived quite prematurely for this 41-year-old man. But in a single accident, Humble aged considerably.

Not too many years ago, Humble and his wife, Michelle, shared a considerable income. He owned a construction company in Michigan, and she was a legal secretary. They moved to the Rochester area a couple of years ago so Michelle, 32, could attend college full-time at Rochester Institute of Technology to fulfill her dream of becoming a professional photographer.

Randy found new construction work here but about 18 months ago, he fell from the second floor of a house he was working on, breaking his leg and back. He has been declared permanently disabled.

With the fall also came a financial tumble. Randy said he got caught in the system, explaining, "I didn't make enough money to survive on, but too much to qualify for welfare."

Randy's slow recovery, along with the family's unenviable financial picture, forced his wife to consider quitting college. But "If I did, I wouldn't go back," she said.

So Michelle continues taking out loans and hopes to begin generating full-time income after she graduates in 2004. For now, though, there's not enough money to provide for the



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Randy Humble and his wife, Michelle, help their daughter, Becky, with a homework assignment at their Spencerport home Nov. 14. The family received emergency Christmas Appeal funds through Catholic Family Center after a construction accident left Randy disabled.

couple's two children, Becky, 9, and Justin, 7. Faced with \$2,200 in monthly bills, the family receives only \$1,600 per month in disability payments.

Earlier this fall they got in touch with Bobbi McGarrity, senior case manager at the Catholic Family Center. They were quickly approved for a \$500 allotment from the Christmas Appeal, an annual campaign cosponsored by the *Catholic Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities. The appeal raises funds for people throughout the diocese who are in emergency situations. Randy and Michelle put their Christmas Appeal allotment

toward back rent on the modest house in which they reside.

Randy considers the Christmas Appeal money a bright spot in a period that's been marked not only by physical struggles, but also depression from the realization that he can't return to his profession.

Randy is also thankful for his family's support, saying his wife and kids are the main reasons he has been able to cope. Their home is filled with family photos taken by Michelle, including a shot of their son sleeping in his father's arms.

"He still does that," Randy said. "Just the little things make this all worth it."

Prior recipients

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

★ \$39.99 was used to help a young man buy work boots so he could obtain a security job.

★ \$35 was used to help a grandmother purchase diapers and infant formula for a grandchild that was unexpectedly left in her care.

★ \$159 was used to assist a young, working single mother replace her refrigerator when it broke down.

★ \$25 was used to purchase gasoline for a young man who recently obtained employment, but had no means to buy gasoline to travel back and forth to work.

★ \$50 was used to help a family who recently moved to Rochester from Puerto Rico purchase food.

★ \$29.99 was used to assist a young mother purchase a special kind of infant formula, when the baby would not take the regular formula.

★ \$600 was used to help a grandmother, who was raising several of her grandchildren, pay a mortgage payment and avoid foreclosure after an unexpected financial crisis.

★ \$150 was used to assist a moth-

er avoid a utility shutoff when she was suddenly laid off from her job.

★ \$38.97 was used to help a young couple with two small children purchase poison to rid their apartment of an unexpected rodent problem.

★ \$55 was used to help a young man with severe depression and mental health issues relocate to the South to be with his family, who were his support system.

★ \$34 was used to assist a working mother with one child travel to Buffalo when her brother died suddenly.

★ \$466 was used to assist a mentally challenged individual remain in his apartment as he awaited Social Security benefits.

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