

Christmas Appeal donations down

Drive officials believe economy was a factor

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

In a year in which several not-for-profit organizations have suffered donation declines, the *Catholic Courier/Catholic Charities* annual Christmas Appeal also fell significantly short of its goal.

The 2002 Christmas Appeal raised a little more than \$45,474, marking a decline of more than \$5,400 — or nearly 11 percent — from last year's tally of \$50,889, according to Donna Stubbings, circulation manager for the *Courier* and appeal coordinator. A cooperative effort of the *Courier* and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, the appeal raises funds for direct emergency assistance to needy people and their families.

Both the number of donors and the average size of donations declined from last year, according to a report provided by the *Catholic Courier*. This year, 821 donors gave an average gift of \$55.39, whereas last year, 875 donors gave an average gift of \$58.16, the report indicated.

Demographic information has never been collected from Christmas Appeal donors, but the modest size of donations suggests that a large percentage of donors may be elderly people and those who do not have much money to spare themselves, Stubbings observed.

"It also seems likely that the number of longtime donors passing away each year has been larger than the number of new donors we have been attracting through *Courier* articles and other means," Stubbings said.

Judy Taylor, Catholic Charities



File photo

In this photo from the recently concluded campaign, Willie Mae Neal decorated the Christmas tree in her Rochester home. Neal received holiday food through funding from the Christmas Appeal.

communication manager, said that she had anticipated a drop in donations this year, but not as great as the one the Christmas Appeal experienced. She added that she could only speculate on the causes for the drop, ranging from anxiety about the war to concerns about the economy and the church's abuse scandals.

"Who knows how many of our donors are experiencing an economic pinch as a result of all that's been going on in the nation and the world," she said.

Yet Taylor said she was grateful to those who did choose to donate this year. "I think it's the type of request and the type of charity that people are very sympathetic and empathetic to," she said.

She noted that more than 99 percent of Christmas Appeal funds go directly to needy people. "It's the working poor who are seeking this emergency assistance for the most part," Taylor said.

She noted that many recipients of Christmas Appeal-funded help are working two or three jobs, but can't

afford such things as health insurance, or run into problems affording food, transportation or rent. "It's the person who doesn't qualify for other types of assistance," she said.

Christmas Appeal funds are distributed through the various offices of Catholic Charities throughout the diocese, as well as such affiliated agencies as the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation Inc. Taylor noted that it is important for such agencies to get Christmas Appeal funds, or they will have to find other sources to pay for providing emergency assistance.

"The number of people turning to them for help is not decreasing," she said. "Too many of our neighbors are at a point where they don't know where else to turn."

Although the appeal is officially over, Taylor stressed that people can donate throughout the year.

"It's a seasonal campaign, but the need is year-round, and the proceeds that come out of the Christmas Appeal really do get used year-round," she said.

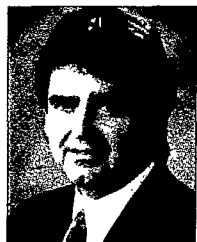
To donate, mail a check or money order payable to "Christmas Appeal" to: Christmas Appeal, c/o Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624-0379.

CCFL names new executive director

GENEVA — Richard Fowler has been named executive director of Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, replacing Giovina Carosco, who served more than 20 years in the position.

A graduate of Hobart College in Geneva, Fowler has a master of business administration and a master's degree in education and human development from the University of Rochester and a juris doctor degree from the University at Buffalo School of Law.

He served the Greece Central School District and Town of Greece Youth and Family Services for 10 years as a school outreach worker, program coordinator and executive



director. Additionally, Fowler served eight years as a regional administrator and CEO for a five-county division of Children's Home Society of Florida. While completing law school he served as a consultant or contract employee for a number of private, not-for-profit organizations, including the Harley School in Rochester.

In a statement, Fowler said he is "honored to join such a dedicated staff of human service professionals, and such a distinguished board of directors."



Catholic Courier

to honor

'Milestone' Anniversaries

The *Catholic Courier* again plans to honor couples who are celebrating "Milestone" anniversaries this year.

Couples who marked or will mark 25, 50 or more years of marriage this year may be listed in the special Milestones/Vocations issue, which will be published May 15.

We will accept anniversaries

occurring between Jan. 1, 2003 and Dec. 31, 2003.

Please send the following information: Full names of husband and wife; date of wedding; church and city where married.

Also include a telephone number should questions arise.

Deadline for submission is Thursday, May 1.

Send the information to:

Catholic Courier, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624
or e-mail it to agall@catholiccourier.com.

