

—Christmas Appeal—

CFC helps needy find food

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

Stan was used to working to support himself. He started working when he was 14 years old, and assumed that he would be financially stable by the time he retired. Now, at age 67, he says finding enough money to buy basic food and toiletries is a struggle.

"Things are pretty rough right now," admitted Stan, who asked that his last name not be disclosed. Stan said that he hasn't purchased new clothes or eaten at a restaurant in four years.

Life wasn't always like this for Stan.

He graduated from Aquinas Institute in 1956 and continued his education at St. John Fisher College. After a few years, Stan gave in to the wanderlust he was feeling and joined the United States Coast Guard for four years. After leaving the Coast Guard, Stan worked for Xerox, moved to Seattle, Wash., and later got into construction work, eventually moving to Hawaii.

While Stan was in Hawaii, his mother was diagnosed with cancer, so he moved back to New York to take care of her. He later started working in personnel at Janicare, helping people find janitorial jobs. He was laid off from Janicare three years ago, at age 64, and fell on hard times. Not only was Stan forced to live solely off Social Security retirement benefits, but he was also diagnosed with prostate cancer, which later spread to his legs and bones.

"Then I needed some help, so that's why I called LIFESPAN," Stan said.

LIFESPAN is a nonprofit organization that provides services, information and guidance to older adults. Someone at LIFESPAN suggested Stan contact Catholic Family Center,



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Volunteers Edna Craven (left) and Amelia Kipp distribute bread to those in need at Rochester's Catholic Family Center Dec. 10. Stan, a local man who asked that his last name not be used, has received food assistance from CFC through the *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal.

where he met Bobbi McGarrity, senior case manager, who was able to give Stan \$50 worth of food vouchers. Money for the vouchers came from the Christmas Appeal, an annual joint effort by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester and the *Catholic Courier* to raise monies for people in emergency situations.

McGarrity said CFC has also given Stan a Thanksgiving basket and some personal items, such as laundry soap, which are not covered by food vouchers but are necessary to be clean.

"He's just wonderful. He's just really trying hard," McGarrity said.

Stan describes himself as a very independent and proud person, who is not used to relying on others or taking handouts, and said he only goes to CFC for help when he really

needs it.

"I've tried to do everything on my own my whole life. I'll help people rather than ask for help. I've worked all my life, I had everything I wanted. Now all the sudden I ain't got nothing," Stan said.

McGarrity also said CFC caseworkers have become a support system for Stan, who has no family and lives alone with his 8-year-old Husky named Kismet, or Kissy for short. However, as his medical bills pile up, Stan worries about eventually having to give up both his dog and his apartment.

"I'm trying to maintain my apartment, but it seems like the financial things keep growing and growing and growing, especially with the medication," Stan said. "I'm trying to live one day at a time."

Prior recipients

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

★ A couple and their eight children were evicted from their small, three-bedroom apartment. The family lost most of its furniture and had little food after paying a security deposit on a new apartment. The family received \$152 for food, furniture and clothing.

★ A mother of two children under the age of 4 recently became single again. She was in the process of finding child care for her children so she could go back to work, and was in need of diapers, household items and asthma medication for the youngest child. She received \$250 for one month's worth of diapers and to assist with one month's worth of medication. She was also provided with curtains and blankets and was referred to a child-care provider.

★ A young woman was facing homelessness due to an unpaid utility

bill. She received \$184.08 which was used to help her pay her utility bill and to buy food and medication for depression.

★ A single father with three small children lost his job and received \$125 to prevent his family from becoming homeless.

★ A single mother was reunited with her four children who had been in foster care. She is presently unemployed and did not have money to buy beds for the children. She received \$87.97 to buy beds from a second-hand store.

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