

Christmas Appeal edges past goal

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

The *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal has met its 2003 goal of \$48,000.

According to Donna Stubbings, the appeal's coordinator, a total of \$48,800 had been raised as of Jan. 20. That surpasses the final figure of \$45,474 for 2002.

The \$48,800 represents an average gift of nearly \$65, made by a total of 755 donors. Stubbings noted that a single donation of \$5,000 was key in the appeal reaching its goal. This year's appeal attracted 69 fewer donors than in the 2002 campaign when the average donation was \$55.

In addition to the \$5,000 contribution, Stubbings stated that every Christmas Appeal gift helps make a difference.

"Every year, without fail, we get a half-dozen envelopes with two singles (dollar bills) in it — from somebody who could probably really use the \$2 — and a note saying 'Sorry we couldn't give more,'" said Stubbings, who also serves as circulation manager for the *Catholic Courier*.

This marked the 34th year of the annual Christmas Appeal, a cooperative effort between the *Catholic Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities that raises emergency funds for needy people and their families. Many recipients are working poor — holding down one or more jobs but unable to easily afford, or get other means of support for, such necessities



Wilson Tyrone Raggs recalls Dec. 3 how he received help from case manager Renee Okafor and the *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal.

ties as health insurance, food, transportation or rent.

Stubbings believes that ongoing support for this campaign is fueled by case studies documented in *Courier* stories each year between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"I would read about the neediest cases and would probably be in tears a lot of the time," Stubbings recalled about past stories. "You just can't imagine people who don't have enough money for a bus token to get to work, or to get medicine for their child."

File photo

generosity."


Donations are allocated to Catholic Family Center in Rochester; Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes; Catholic Charities offices in Livingston, Steuben, Chemung/Schuyler and Tompkins/Tioga counties; Catholic Charities Community and Residential Services; Kinship Family and Youth Services; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation; and various parish and community services in Monroe County.

Although the Christmas Appeal's peak donation period is November through January, Taylor emphasized that donations "can be made year round — and are needed year round."

"This winter is already extra harsh," she explained. "It will likely put many — who are without the means to cope with additional medical, transportation or heating expenses — over the edge into crisis."


EDITOR'S NOTE: Donations to the 2003 Christmas Appeal are still being accepted through Jan. 31; any monies received after that date will go toward the 2004 appeal. Checks — payable to Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal — may be sent to Christmas Appeal, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624-0379 at any time of year.

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