Christmas Appeal edges past goal

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

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

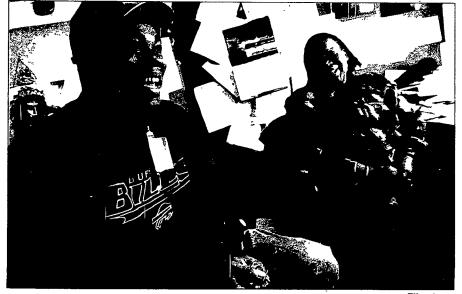
According to Donna Stubbings, the appeal's coordinator, a total of \$48,800 had been raised as of Jan. 20. That surpasses the final figure of \$45,474 for 2002.

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 necessi-



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

Judy Taylor, diocesan Catholic Charities communications manager, agreed that the Courier publicity touches a special spot in donors'

"What a gift of hope for those who will turn to the Catholic community for help," Taylor commented. "The Catholic Courier told the compelling , story of neighbors in need, and reads ers responded with compassion and 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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