

# People, love fill Henrietta home

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

Although her children have long since grown up and moved out, Cecilia Ward's Henrietta home is still bursting at the seams.

Born in Germany in 1936, Ward came to the United States at age 20, and eventually got married and raised three children. After her daughter and two sons grew up and moved out, Ward was left with three empty bedrooms and more love than she knew what to do with. She began taking people with special needs into her home, and continues to share her house with the people she calls her "special angels."

Over the years, she has opened her home to nine of these "angels," five of whom still reside in her extra bedrooms — Glenn Bassett, Sean Davis, Clayton Popp, Al Abraham and Don Vigliotti. In the 1970s, Ward

took in then-teenagers Bassett, Davis and Popp. Abraham and Vigliotti, who are now 63 and 76, respectively, joined the family in the 1990s.

They may not share a last name, but Ward says the six are truly a family. Ward takes her "boys" to aerobics and square-dancing classes, local festivals, sporting events and even vacations to Florida. Her biological children get along well with the men, she said, and the two sets of families often spend time together.

"We do everything together. I have a very, very good life with these guys. I'm nice to them and they're nice to me. When I need help, they help. When they need help, I can help," she added.

Ward, known to the men as "Mom," shuttles her charges to doctor and dentist appointments and prepares their meals, while they help her with cleaning and grocery shopping. On weekdays, everyone in the house rises at 6 a.m. before going their separate ways for the day. Bassett, Davis and Abraham have jobs, Vigliotti spends the day at the Jewish Home of Rochester and Popp goes to a day program.

Sundays, however, are special. The men sleep in while Ward prepares "a breakfast fit for a king." After breakfast, everyone piles into Ward's van to attend Mass at Church of the Good Shepherd, where she is a parishioner.

"I taught all the guys how to pray. They pray good, and they sing good. They're each making just a few dol-



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

**Cecilia Ward and Glenn Bassett enjoy their Sunday breakfast Feb. 8 before attending Mass at Church of the Good Shepherd in Henrietta. Ward cares for Bassett and four other men who have special needs.**

bed each night, Ward calls up the stairs to make sure they are OK and to tell them she loves them. Night after night, they answer with a chorus of "We love you, too, Mom."

"That is my reward at the end of the day. I want them to go to bed at the end of the day knowing that they are loved," she said.

Ward said she used to wonder why she was lucky enough to be blessed with two loving families, but now she just prays that she will stay healthy enough to continue caring for the men for as long as possible. She is at peace with her life because she's doing what she believes she is meant to do, she said.

"No matter what job you do, as long as you're happy in here," she said, pointing to her heart. "I always say if I can put a smile on somebody's face, God's smiling at me."

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