

Christmas Appeal

Couple gets right prescription

Appeal enables them to purchase medicine

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — Due to their respective disabilities, Dorothy and Alfred Barnes have seen their combined income decline over the past several years from a high of \$70,000 to their current income of \$12,000.

They've gone from able-bodied workers who owned their own home to people with disabilities who live in a rented residence, Dorothy noted.

Dorothy, formerly employed as an interior decorator, has been gradually losing her eyesight for the past decade.

"It's like looking through a T-shirt," she said of her eyesight, which is hampered by a number of ailments, including nerve problems and macular degeneration. Meanwhile, Alfred suffers from diabetes and a shoulder disability, and stopped working in 2000 after 22 years as an employee of a government agency.

"We're both on medications," Dorothy said, adding that the couple lives on her social security disability payments. Her husband is awaiting approval for similar payments. She noted that they sometimes have to choose between paying for their medications and paying their rent or other bills.

In September of this year, they

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Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Dorothy Barnes, who has become visually impaired after years of suffering from macular degeneration, and her husband, Alfred, recently received financial assistance from Rochester's Catholic Family Center through the annual Christmas Appeal.

were having difficulty paying for their prescriptions as well as their rent, but had learned that Catholic Family Center might be able to help them. The Catholic Charities agency was able to provide the couple with \$327 to help with the rent and \$50 to help with prescription medications, according to Bobbi McGarrity, senior case manager for CFC's Community Resource Services. The funds were provided through the Christmas Appeal, a cooperative effort of the *Catholic Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities.

This is the 35th year of the Christmas Appeal, which provides grants to help families and individuals facing various financial challenges, from an inability to purchase medicines to a need to buy food and diapers. More than 750 individuals donated a total of \$49,120 to the 2003 appeal, according to Donna Stubbings, appeal coordinator and circulation manager for the *Courier*. The goal of the 2004 appeal is \$54,000.

Proceeds from the appeal will go toward the emergency funds of the various offices of Catholic Charities throughout the 12-county diocese, as well as Kinship Family and Youth Services, Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation and various

Rochester parishes and community ministries. Recipients of appeal funds are often people who are ineligible for other forms of assistance.

Prior appeal donors were slated to receive appeal mailings Thanksgiving week, Stubbings said, and throughout December, the *Courier's* monthly and weekly issues will contain feature stories about individuals and families who've been helped through the Christmas Appeal. These stories will be accompanied by a coupon (shown on this page) encouraging readers to contribute to the appeal.

The Barneses noted that they appreciated the assistance they received through the generosity of *Courier* readers.

"There are many people in the same financial predicament, if not worse," Dorothy said.

She added that she and her husband will continue to help each other overcome their disabilities.

"I do the lifting, and I use his eyes," she said with a smile.

She added that she has no plans to wallow in self-pity about her diminishing eyesight.

"You sit and cry about it, or you keep going," she said. "I'm the type of person that keeps going."

What is the Christmas Appeal?

It is a cooperative effort of the Catholic Courier and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester to raise funds for people in desperate financial crisis.

For the past 35 years, the appeal has enabled the Catholic community to help thousands of people in 12 counties to help meet life's basic needs. Christmas Appeal funds have been there for them when no other source of aid was available.

Who benefits from it?

The Christmas Appeal helps individuals and families in short-term financial crises. These are people who have no financial resources and are either awaiting for or ineligible for assistance through other sources.

How does it work?

Appeal proceeds are allocated to the emergency funds of the following diocesan agencies: Catholic Family Center; Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes; Catholic Charities of Steuben County; Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler; Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga; Catholic Charities of Wayne County; Catholic Charities of Livingston County; Catholic Charities Community Services; Kinship Family and Youth Services; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation; and diocesan Urban Services.

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