

# THE GOOD NEWS

FALL 2017

A QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



## Shared Services Provide Efficiencies, Opportunity



Through its unique decentralized system of governance, together with the strong support of well-developed shared back office services, Catholic Charities enjoys the best of both worlds in delivering human services.

The decision was initially made in 1985 to create a decentralized governance structure through the establishment of bylawed regional or specialty service divisions. There are now nine such divisions to which are delegated most of the powers to run the affairs of the single Catholic Charities corporation in their sphere, with certain over-arching powers reserved to the Diocesan Board and members of the corporation.

This decentralized approach, based on the principle of subsidiarity, allows local Board and staff leaders to make decisions and develop relationships that contribute to their local communities. The separate divisions work closely with local parishes, government, business and civic leaders to determine unmet needs in the community and respond to them collaboratively. Donors recognize that contributions will remain in local communities. Hence, Catholic Charities agencies have remained at the heart and center of service programs in local communities.

At the same time, over the last 15 years, the Diocesan Board and Diocesan staff leadership have given priority attention to developing shared back office services, including finance, human resources, information technology and most recently the compliance function. Through this centralization of services, the agency as a whole

has been able to achieve cost efficiencies and also respond effectively to the changing funding and regulatory environment.

A good example of the value of this administrative approach has been the work to develop the Thriving Families Program in Wayne County. This program, funded by the Federal government at a rate of \$1.6 million per year, was taken on successfully by an agency which at the time had an annual budget of less than \$1 million dollars. While some thought that such a program expansion could not be successfully undertaken by a small agency, it was really the entire \$80 million Catholic Charities entity that provided administration support to develop the program successfully. Further administrative support was provided by affiliate Providence Housing Development Corporation to enable the agency to move into a new larger facility.

As the world of human service delivery changes dramatically with particularly the State and related funders such as managed care organizations seeking to work with larger agencies, this Wayne County example serves as a model of how Diocesan Catholic Charities respond effectively to such challenges.

Examples of new opportunities for the Diocesan entity are participation with three other Diocesan Catholic Charities organizations (Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo) in developing the Medicaid funded Encompass Family Health Home and participation in the current application process to establish a Behavioral Health Care Collaborative.



## GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

### Catholic Charities Community Services



North American Housing and Special Needs Conference.

In early 2016, Governor Cuomo made a historic commitment to combat homelessness through the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) with 2.6 billion dollars designated to provide operation and support services for 6,000 new supportive beds over a five year period. The goal is to give New Yorkers access to safe and secure housing.

**Catholic Charities Community Services** has been awarded a \$500,000/yr. for five years ESSHI grant to provide supportive services to residents who will occupy 20 housing units in the Monroe County area. These funds are conditional on identifying a housing project site. The next step in this process is a collaborative effort with Providence Housing which is currently hard at work to identify a project location and secure capital funding. Providence will also provide long term property management services.

Once the housing is in place, residents, representing some of the most vulnerable populations in our community

including persons who live with intellectual developmental disabilities, severe mental health illnesses, and HIV/AIDS will have access to critically needed services. Through the grant, CCCS will assist in setting up the housing units with basic every day needs like furniture and household items. CCCS will also offer case management services on site, and help residents access transportation, education, employment and more.

One of the key elements of the grant is to achieve housing stabilization. CCCS will use some of the funding to provide rental subsidies, helping residents retain their housing while they continue to work on the goals they have set for themselves to become self-sustaining.

### Catholic Family Center

On August 29th, **Catholic Family Center**, partners and friends were pleased to celebrate the opening of the Restart Outpatient Integrated Care Facility at 79 N. Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14604

Joining CEO Marlene Bessette and Vice President Cathy Saresky were OASAS Commissioner - Arlene González-Sánchez, Dr. Cedric Alexander, Deputy Mayor of the City of Rochester and area dignitaries and representative from major State and private funders.

This new facility, renovated with over \$8 million of support from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), offers state-of-the-art integrated care including: substance use treatment, integrated mental health services and medical services. With this opening, Restart Outpatient Department, which has been providing substance use disorder services for nearly 40 years, now has a site that will allow for the expansion of medical services and medication assisted treatment to address the seri-



David Putney, Director Monroe County Office of Mental Health; Dr. Cedric Alexander, Deputy Mayor City of Rochester, CFC CEO Marlene Bessette; OASAS Commissioner - Arlene González-Sánchez and Fr. Brian Cool.

ous opioid epidemic.

This new facility will serve as the capstone in a continuum of integrated care for the "whole person" which Catholic Family Center offers. In addition to connecting across the agency's Behavioral Health Programs, this facility integrates seamlessly with the Substance Use Residential Stabilization and Rehabilitation Programs. Catholic Family Center continues to be the only human services agency in Monroe County offering a "day rehabilitation" program, and one of the few that accepts mothers with children and/or who are pregnant, so they can stay with their kids during treatment.

CFC is excited for the continued expansion of its programs to provide easy access to those served. Catholic Family Center is proud to contribute to the overall health of our community through the addition of new medical staff positions to the local work force and continued economic expansion in downtown Rochester.

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# REGIONAL ROUNDUP: GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties



Lois Mazzaresse with her daughter Tricia Hughey.

For over 100 years, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester has provided services, support and encouragement to persons in need, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Another important aspect of the work of Catholic Charities, sometimes overlooked, is the support and opportunity for professional and personal growth provided by sharing within the staff community.

At its 12th Annual Empty Bowls Luncheon, held in October and attended by 460 guests, **Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties** recognized three staff members who have been an integral part of the staff community in Elmira. One of those recognized was Lois Mazzaresse, Senior Accountant for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester. Lois is a shining example of a staff person who has grown and been nurtured by the Catholic Charities community.

The story of her journey is an inspiring example of triumph over very difficult circumstances. At age 14, when Lois was a freshman in high school, her mother died and a year later she was abandoned by her father. For a time she spent her days wondering where she would sleep at night. During this time, she overcame her negative and cold thoughts by faith in God's love and warmth, hearing the message that "you are beautiful, intelligent, strong, kind and worthy of all good things." This faith sustained her through high school and when, as a 17 year old, she was living alone, paying rent, utilities and food. Her only form of transportation was walking.

Having survived this difficult adolescence, she gained an education and came to Catholic Charities as a staff member 16 years ago, where she has continued her professional and personal development in this supportive environment.

At the Empty Bowls event, she was honored by words from her daughter, Tricia Hughey. Tricia began her remarks by saying "Regardless of her circumstances, she has become the most selfless, driven and beautiful person I have ever met." Tricia then went on to describe Lois' wonderful parenting skills as well as her contributions to the community.

Lois has always said that her life would have been enhanced if there had been a Catholic Charities program available to her when she was young and in need. "It would have been the people at Catholic Charities that would have guided me, given me direction and encouraged me when I was so discouraged. They would have been a place of comfort, but most of all, they would have given me hope when I felt hopeless."

Today, Lois is part of the team that provides to others "Help that Works, Hope that Lasts."

## Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Food insecurity on college campuses is a serious (and often overlooked) problem, especially for students who live off-campus, are putting themselves through school, and/or may not be able to afford meal plans.

When administrators at Ithaca College learned that some students were struggling and often sacrificing their food budget for other college expenses, they wanted to do something about it. They decided that partnering with the **Food Bank of the Southern Tier** to bring a Mobile Food Pantry to campus was a perfect fit.

"People on campus bought in pretty quickly. When you explain that you're trying to help feed people, what's the downside to that?" explained David Prunty, Executive Director of Auxiliary Services at the college. "It was really nice to see the campus identify a problem, find a partner, and be able to implement something in a pretty short

amount of time."

The entire campus rallied together to spread the word, figure out logistics, and volunteer for the first distribution in March 2017. Over 100 students showed up! When students had trouble getting their food back to their dorm rooms and apartments, Public Safety officers even gave them rides back home in their patrol cars. The partnership was such a success that the College hosted two more distributions before the end of the school year in April and May with 50 to 150 people attending each one.

"Towards the end of the semester money was running short, and the Mobile Food Pantry allowed me to feed myself healthily," said a student. "There were weeks where I didn't know where I would find the money to feed myself, and the food pantry really helped me and my roommates."

Like all Mobile Food Pantry distributions, food was available to anyone who needed it. Poverty and hunger exist everywhere, even on private college campuses.

"It was really helpful to hear a philosophy from the Food Bank that people determine their own need," said David. "At the distributions, there were people who are scrimping and saving to be able to attend a private institution, and there were people who were up front and said, 'sure I have money, but I'm embarrassed to ask my parents for more money and this is a great opportunity to get some fresh produce to tide me over.' Both are legitimate."

"We really appreciate the college and the Food Bank doing this for the students as well as the faculty and staff. Feeding a family of three is expensive and every little bit helps," said one Ithaca College employee. "There is a negative stigma around food pantries and we have to try to end it."

The Ithaca College Mobile Food Pantry was so successful that several more have been planned for the 2017-2018 school year so students and faculty can worry more about homework and exams than where their next meal is coming from.



Mobile Food Pantry volunteers at Ithaca College.

## Catholic Charities of Livingston County

In September, 1995, **Catholic Charities of Livingston County** was established as a separate division of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, in response to the many urgent needs in the County. The first programs offered by the agency were the Rural Outreach program and the Community of Caring program, which had been satellite initiatives of Catholic Family Center administered from Monroe County.

Under the leadership of the newly formed Board and Executive Director Tim McMahon, the agency worked with County government and other community groups to develop new programs to address unmet needs. The first new program, established in 1997, with support from the County Mental Health Department (in conjunction with the Youth Bureau and DSS) was the HOPE Youth Mentoring Program (HOPE stands for Helping One Person Excel.) This year, the program is celebrating its twentieth anniversary, having served over 1,000 children.

Through this program, qualified and trained adult mentors spend an average of 1-2 hours a week with young persons ages 6-14 referred from schools, the Youth Bureau, the Mental Health Department and the County. Young people are assisted academically, socially and emotionally.

Perhaps the program is best described in the words of one of the young people being mentored:

"My mentor is the only constant thing in my life. No matter where they move me, I know she will always come for me. I love spending time with her family, because it show me what a normal family is like. She has taught me that every family is different and none are all that normal. She believes in me so much that it makes it easier for me to believe in myself."



## Catholic Charities of Wayne County

As part of its leadership role within the Wayne County Coordinating Council, **Catholic Charities of Wayne County** has worked over the last several months with Casey Family Programs to host a Community Planning Session on improving the welfare of youth and families in the Newark area. Casey Family Programs supports local efforts to keep kids in productive homes and out of governmental placement throughout our nation. The shared goals of this event were: to nourish existing community relationships; to engage the larger, collective community to refine a shared vision for youth education, safety and well-being; and to strategize opportunities to advance local community engagement to then expand throughout Wayne County.

62 community members attended the planning session, representing local businesses, county entities, social/welfare groups, service providers, faith communities, and local educators. Data was presented on current risk and protective factors for local kids, and focus groups tackled topics of supporting children by addressing fundamental needs – food, clothing, safe housing, and safe family and educational environments; family health and safety engaging productive community attachment and prevention services; and striving towards stabilizing homes with positive parental influence. Many issues complicate the availability of these resources in Wayne County and the motivation behind this event was to shine a hopeful light on combining local leadership minds to best meet the evolving needs of local children and families. In follow up to this event, Wayne Catholic Charities staff also met recently with Wayne County DSS leadership regarding a new grant from NYS OCSF that will help them support families in post-guardianship and post adoption circumstances.

## Catholic Charities of Steuben County

At its Annual Award Dinner, held Thursday, October 26 at the Bath Country Club in Bath, NY, **Catholic Charities of Steuben County** recognized individuals and organizations for outstanding commitment to the agency, its mission and service provision.

The highest community honor, the **Friends of Catholic Charities Award**, recognizes an individual or organization that has helped CCS achieve its mission of building community, strengthening families, reducing poverty, and advocating for social justice. This year, the honor went to Board member and Strategic Growth Planning Committee Chair **Jon Chester** of Corning, NY. In presenting the award, CCS Board Chair Gary Pease commended Jon for "uniting us in a common vision as well as helping us to structure ourselves for growth, excellence and future success."

The **William and Dorothy Belknap Award** recognizes an individual or organization who has, through their efforts and dedication, promoted the work of CCS in providing Substance Free Living Prevention Services to youth, families, and communities. This year's award went to **Richard (Dick) McCandless** of Victor, NY. Mr. McCandless has been involved with helping, guiding, advocating, and mentoring youth for more than 40 years, including serving as a teacher and guidance counselor, overseeing the Steuben County Youth Bureau's Steuben County Youth and Government program, and serving as the Chair of the Substance Free Living Advisory Council.

The **Barbara Fairbanks Award** recognizes an individual or individuals who exemplify Barb's strong commitment to advocating for the children of Steuben County through their support of CCS' Kinship Family and Youth service line. This year's recipient was the **Addison Central School District** for their Innovative Approaches to



Sharon Sitrin-Moore on behalf of Senator Tom O'Mara and CCS Executive Director Laura Opelt joined CCS Board Chair Gary Pease in presenting the Friends of Catholic Charities Award to CCS Board member and Strategic Growth Planning Committee Chair, Jon Chester. (From Left: Sharon Sitrin-Moore, Jon Chester, Gary Pease, Laura Opelt)

Literacy initiative, a grant-funded program designed to connect community partners in a collaborative effort preparing children for successful entry into Kindergarten and providing a continuum of high-quality literacy education.

The **Works of Love Award** recognizes the extraordinary effort of a member of the faith community who collaborates with CCS to act on social justice issues and serve the most vulnerable in the community, advancing CCS' mission through various works of love. This year's award went to **Rev. J. Brad Benson** of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Bath, NY. Rev. Benson was an integral part of setting up an interfaith fund that allows CCS' Turning Point poverty services to assist folks with situations that would be out-of-scope for other funding sources, such as laundry, gas cards, hotel stays to avert homelessness, and more.

The **Spirit of Turning Point Award** recognizes a volunteer whose contribution helps to advance the work of Turning Point, either through advocacy, education, building relationships, developing resources, or increasing capacity. This year, CCS chose to honor posthumously **Rev. Thomas Kuehner** of Corning, NY, formerly with Victory Highway Wesleyan Church in Painted Post, NY. Rev. Kuehner advanced the work of Turning Point by giving of his time and talent as well as through his role as Missions Pastor at Victory. Among its myriad services, Turning Point offers Basic Needs Services to help clients avert homelessness, utility shut-off, hunger, and medicine shortage.

The **Andy Mazzella Compassion Award** was established in honor of Andy Mazzella, who has dedicated many years of service to CCS both as a volunteer and paid staff, working with deeply felt compassion to assist low income families in our community who are struggling. This award gives special recognition to those individuals in CCS or in the Steuben County community who have given selflessly of themselves to improve the human condition of others. This year, the award went to **Fritz Mettler** of Campbell, NY. Mr. Mettler established and maintains an operation that accepts donations of clothing, household items, and furniture and distributes the items free of charge to those in need. Recently, Mettler used his own resources to purchase a Grange Hall for his project.

The **Golden Shoe Award** recognizes the individual walker or team who raised the most funds for CCS' annual Steps to End Poverty in Steuben (STEPS) Walk. The one mile walk not only raises funds to support Turning Point's poverty programs, but also raises awareness about poverty in Steuben County. The walk takes place in three locations across Steuben County corresponding to Turning Point locations in the Bath, Corning, and Hornell/Canisteo areas. Funds raised in each location stay in that location. This year, the walks raised more than \$31,000 county-wide to assist neighbors in need. This year's Golden Shoe Award recipient was **St. Thomas' Walk the Talk Team**, who raised \$3,800 to support Turning Point Bath. Accepting the award on behalf of St. Thomas' Walks the Talk Team was Rev. J. Brad Benson of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Bath, NY.

The **Robert Turissini Award for Extraordinary Service** was established by the CCS Board of Directors as a special way to honor outstanding employees. Bob Turissini was instrumental in establishing Catholic Charities of Steuben. His dedicated service and leadership as the first CCS Board Chair guided the agency from its creation in 1997 to position the agency for success today. This year's recipient was CCS Fundraising/Communications Director **Paula Smith** of Corning, NY. In presenting the award, CCS Executive Director Laura Opelt said, "This year's winner is an employee who embodies and

inspires excellence. She has helped our organization to grow financially, has demonstrated initiative, builds effective relationships, is both customer and business focused, has improved and increased our communications, has created branding materials and enhanced our public profile."

This year's dinner was attended by over 100 persons. Among attendees were State Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, Sharon Sitrin-Moore (representing State Senator Tom O'Mara), and Allison Hunt, District Director for Congressman Tom Reed, representatives of County government and of various faith communities in the County.

## Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes

On Saturday, November 4th in celebrating the **Year of the Eucharist**, Catholic Charities leadership participated in a mass recognizing the 35th anniversary of the agency.

Over all this time, meeting basic needs has been one of the cornerstones of **Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes**. Through the provision of Emergency Assistance services and the Geneva Community Lunch Program, the agency has established system of working directly with individuals and families to meet their basic needs. The challenge, in recent months, has been to keep up with the ever-increasing needs of the programs. "What we've seen locally is an increased demand for utility assistance, food assistance and housing assistance," said Bill Lamb, Director of Services. "Add to that an increase of almost 300 meals per month served at the Geneva Community Lunch Program, and we are in a position of unprecedented need in our community."

With offices located in Geneva, Canandaigua, Auburn and Penn Yan, staff from the Emergency Assistance program are tasked with assessing need, identifying resources to meet the need, and assuring that the family is better-positioned to meet their financial needs in the future. Taking an individual approach with each person or family requesting services is one of the key pieces of this program. No one solution fits every family, and this requires program staff to be well-informed of the community resources and services available to the low-income community.

The agency is working hard with community partners to identify what is contributing to the increased need, and to develop systems of community response to meet those needs. For instance, in attempting to support the local Puerto Rican community, working with the local school district, the local Department of Social Services, law enforcement and other community leaders, the agency is instrumental in putting in place a structure to respond to families displaced from recent storms. Families turn to other family members when there is crisis, and with many of the families here already living in vulnerable conditions, there was great concern for the health, safety and well-being of all involved. We can't take for granted that some of our most poor and vulnerable community residents are financially able to host additional family members. "Making our services available is an important way we can continue to meet the needs of the poor...those who have been long-known to us, and those new to our community", Lamb said.

## Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties

In many dioceses, efforts to promote Catholic Social Teaching are centralized at the diocesan headquarters, but in the Rochester Diocese, Justice and Peace staff are assigned throughout its 12 counties through Catholic Charities. At **Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties**, our Justice & Peace Ministry recently coordinated **Peace Week**, an annual series of events promoting peace and non-violence. Co-sponsored by Catholic parishes in the county, Peace Week included a presentation by an emeritus Cornell University professor on the effects of war on the environment, making the connections between militarism and continued degradation of the planet. A Muslim-Quaker-Catholic dialogue event brought together people from the three faith traditions to speak of their beliefs about war and conscientious objection to military service. It was an occasion for fellowship and community building, and a reminder of how much people of faith have in common.

Peace Week also included a prayer service featuring a large inter-parish choir and a reading of Pope Francis' message for the 2017 World Day of Peace. Participants heard the Holy Father's reminder that "An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and

among peoples **cannot** be based on the logic of **fear, violence and closed-mindedness**, but on **responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue**.... Everyone can be an artisan of peace."

This fall the Justice and Peace Ministry also organized a **Poverty Simulation**, a group role-playing exercise which puts participants in the shoes of low income families. Each participant was assigned a character in a low-income household and had to carry out the demands of daily living, such as getting to work, paying the bills, and buying enough food to feed the family, all on very limited time and resources. Nearly 50 participants, including teachers, families with children and retirees, took part. Catholic Charities staffers and other volunteers played the roles of the pawn broker, rent collector, social worker, teacher, employer and others with whom the participants interact. The event was an eye-opening exercise for all, raising awareness of the stresses and nearly impossible structural challenges that Catholic Charities' clients face every day.



The Poverty Simulation group dialogue in Ithaca.

## Providence Housing Development Corporation

Since its inception in 1994, **Providence Housing Development Corporation** has worked to partner with Catholic Charities to provide needed services in its housing projects.

Previous projects have involved collaboration with Catholic Family Center, Catholic Charities Community Services, Catholic Charities of Wayne County and Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties.

Currently Providence is partnering with two agencies to develop projects under the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative. The partnership with Catholic Charities Community Services is described in this newsletter in the description of that agency's work.

Providence is well on the way to developing a very similar project in Elmira in collaboration with Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties. This 20 unit project will be located on Powell Street, just across the street from another Providence project, McNiff Commons. Like the Community Services project, this project will provide safe, affordable housing for a variety of vulnerable and special needs populations. Through this grant, Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties will assist residents in setting up the housing units with basic needs including furniture and other household items. Catholic Charities will also offer case management services on site and help residents access transportation, education and employment.

This fall, site approval was obtained for the project. In the spring, Providence will apply to one or more of a variety of sources to access capital funding for the project.

## Camp Stella Maris

For over 90 years **Camp Stella Maris** has been a home away from home for children to experience the magic of summer camp. This summer, over 2,000 campers were able attend a week of camp. During this Christmas season, Camp leadership remembers those who have offered their gifts and talent throughout 2017. Counselors' commitment to the mission of continued spiritual, physical, and emotional growth has a profound and lasting impact on the children they serve. The **Charles M. Bayer Campership Program**, which partners with Diocesan and Social Service organizations as well as individual families, provided needs-based Camp scholarships for over 300 children and their families in 2017. The Campership Program is funded by both individual donations and fundraising events. This program has provided financial assistance to between 10 and 15 percent of resident camp enrollment since 1977.

# Life Issues: Respect Life

“Be Not Afraid”, This theme of the 2017-2018 Respect Life Program encourages us to heed these words found so often in Scripture. A portion of the program flyer expounds on this:

“Reflecting on the healed wounds of the Risen Christ, we see that even our most difficult trials can be the place where God manifests his victory. He makes all things beautiful. He makes all things new.”

He is *always* with us. Jesus promised this when he gave the disciples the same mission he gives to each of us: Go.

**Go be my hands and feet to a world enslaved by fear. Go to the woman who is unexpectedly pregnant and fears the future. Go to your friend who fears reprisal at work because he takes a stand for the protection of human life. Go to your aging parent in failing health who fears being a burden. And go to others, too, for their support.**

Walk with each other. Do not be afraid to embrace God’s gift of life. Whatever storms or trials we face, we are not alone. He is with us.

“Behold, I am with you *always*, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).\*

This year’s program includes topics that we have been addressing here in the Diocese of Rochester, like *Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing: understanding and preparing for our earthly passing in a way that respects God’s gift of human life.* *Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide* addresses a specific end of life issue that has been a recent focus of our Diocesan Public Policy Committee and of the NYS Catholic Conference in light of proposed



bills to legalize assisted suicide.

Catholic Charities will continue to educate and advocate against assisted suicide as a significant human rights issue, especially for vulnerable elderly and disabled people.

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To see the U.S. bishops’ new Respect Life materials centered on the theme *Be Not Afraid* visit [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife). There are articles, prayers, action ideas, and more!

## CATHOLIC COURIER CATHOLIC CHARITIES Christmas Appeal



*Assisting people in Short-term financial crisis.*

Catholic Charities urges support of the Catholic Courier Christmas Appeal through which much needed funds are made available for emergency assistance at Catholic Charities agencies.

Send your contribution to:  
**Christmas Appeal**  
P.O. Box 24379  
Rochester, NY 14624-0379

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THE  
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