

Catholic Charities Emergency Energy Assistance Fund again gets major grant increase from National Grid Foundation

Two area residents detail their very real need for this assistance

It was just one year ago, in one of the coldest winters in recent memory, when Anthony Davis of Cohoes was struggling financially with recent moving expenses. Fortunately, Catholic Charities came through with emergency energy assistance to give him some breathing room so he could get power turned on in his new apartment.

When Denise Peterson of Albany learned that expected full-time hours from her part-time job would not be forthcoming, she quickly fell behind in her bill paying. If it wasn't for Catholic Charities Emergency Energy Assistance Fund (EEAF) she might have lost her utility service.

These are just two examples of how Catholic Charities, ***Caring Beyond Belief***, is out there every day trying to help relieve all kinds of difficulties in this very difficult economy.

It's also why Catholic Charities is so grateful to the National Grid Foundation for coming through today with another increase in its fourth annual grant in support of these efforts. The \$60,000 grant was presented in Albany to Catholic Charities Chief Executive Officer Vincent W. Colonno.

Mr. Colonno said, "Through our partnership with the National Grid Foundation, Catholic Charities will be able to increase its response to the emergency energy assistance needs of individuals and families who struggle during this heating season. This special initiative funded by the Foundation looks to the greater community to contribute to this fund so that additional households in the 14-county region can be helped."

Also expressing gratitude was Albany Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, "With poverty rates between 7.5 % and 17.3% in the 14 counties that Catholic Charities serves, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany is pleased with the partnership between Catholic Charities and the National Grid Foundation to help provide support to the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in our communities who are experiencing problems with meeting their energy assistance needs."

In presenting the check, Bob Keller, President of National Grid Foundation, said, "We are extremely grateful for the relationship we have forged with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany to combat fuel poverty in the Capital Region. In the face of drastic cuts in government funding, our support of Catholic Charities has never been more critical and our partnership, never more meaningful."

It is support like this that is so very important to so many in the greater Capital Region, especially in the depths of winter when Catholic Charities continues to receive so many requests for emergency energy assistance. The agency now projects close to a 10% increase in demand this year.

As part of its effort, Catholic Charities officials also announced a challenge to the greater community to help those in need, especially during this heating season, with contributions to the EEAF. Visitors to the Catholic Charities web site (<http://www.ccrda.org/>) will find a special interest story about the National Grid Foundation grant, and visitors can click on a link that will take them to a contribution page customized for the EEAF.

In addition, local Catholic Charities agencies also will be promoting this challenge in their communities, and word will be spread through their newsletters, mailed to stakeholders, donors and friends of the Catholic Charities agencies.