

Mission accomplished

As Deacon Walter Doyle, his wife Kathy and other members of the Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope family count their blessings, so do all of those the organization has helped over the years.

Recently, Christina Galeone points out, the Canterbury Street-based Catholic nonprofit celebrated the 40th anniversary “of one of its hallmark programs.”

Each year, Ms. Galeone says, “with the help of over one hundred fifty volunteers, several Central Massachusetts churches, small businesses and many individuals,” Urban Missionaries’ Christmas Giving initiative provides new winter coats and thousands of Christmas gifts to impoverished children in the area.”

This season, Deacon Doyle, who co-founded Urban Missionaries with his wife, embraced a new challenge by launching a GoFundMe campaign with a goal of raising \$20,000 on behalf of a mother of five who was expecting triplets.

Her story touched his heart, Mr. Doyle said in Urban Missionaries’ newsletter, after his “tender, joyful exchange” with her. After she left, “there was something nagging at me,” he wrote. “All day, into the evening, and it was still there after I woke up the next day. How is the family going to survive?”

Now a mother of eight

Discussing the mother’s situation in Urban Missionaries’ thrift store on December 29th, Charley O’Neill, who runs the shop, said the mother had a successful birth “and Walter and Kathy visited and Kathy got to hold one of the babies.” With “just a sister to help,” the mom now has eight children to care for.

Make a donation for her at urbanmissionaries.com.

The thrift store is just one aspect of all that Urban Missionaries does for the neighborhood and the community, Mr. O’Neill said.

“We operate two food pantries, in collaboration with Wegman’s in Northborough, Price Chopper in Shrewsbury and Big Y in Holden.

“We have a housing component, we do a lot of pastoral, we have the Sister Alice Petty Program which is primarily for immigrants and refugees,” he said.

Mr. O’Neill used to work in computers and is now an avid overseer of the thrift store.

Pointing to a mattress priced at \$100, he said “with a loyalty card you get 10% off and it’s 70% off if you are low income.”

Clothing and other items are “cycled through” to make room for new inventory.

Sometimes, “Walter will say ‘I’m allowing this woman to ‘buy’ \$200 worth of furniture’” at no cost.

This year’s Christmas Giving program served “760 families, and 2000 in total got presents,”

Mr. O’Neill said. ■



Charley O’Neill, right, general manager of Urban Missionaries’ “The Little Store” on Canterbury St., with staffers Anthony G. and Karl Van Osch on December 29th. “We try to put out a better product and with great discounts” than can be found elsewhere, he says.



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