

Goodwill is year-round activity

By JOAN RYZAK

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The Dearborn Church of Christ isn't involved in a typical pre-Christmas goodwill drive.

Instead, members of the congregation have established a continuing benevolent program to help needy families throughout the year.

Food drives are held to stock the fund's pantry. New clothing is purchased and used articles collected. Appliances and other equipment are restored to working order. Then the goods are delivered to the poor.

DONALD BONE, minister of the church, at 7350 Chase, said the project began last December to revive the church's practice of caring for the poor in the community.

"I guess Dearborn is theoretically and historically thought of as an affluent area," he said, "but there are a lot of people in need who live here."

About 25 families have benefited from the program to date, including 100 children.

Dana Martin, chairman of the program, estimated that 12 families are presently receiving help.

Martin explained that the program is not a "one shot" deal in which a load of groceries is delivered to a family, new clothing purchased and the contact ended. Instead, the committee attempts to help in "whatever way they can for as long as the family needs it."

"If they need medical attention and cannot afford it," Martin said, "we see if we can help them pay some of the bills. If they need money for other emergencies, we try to make some contributions. We even went over and helped a man fix his furnace."

THE DEARBORN public school system and the Dearborn police department play a major role in determining who the program will assist.

"If a school administrator or policeman spots a family in the area that needs help," Martin said, "they give us their name, we contact them and see what we can work out. Our service is not limited to members of our congregation."

Besides benefiting the community, the benevolence program offers all age groups in the church an opportunity to work together.

The ladies sewing club makes clothes for the families and patches used articles while the men refurbish furniture and get appliances back in working order.

Members of the church's teen-age homemaking class also have joined the work force by contributing clothing they have made. Other teens run errands and visit families.

Benevolent project headquarters are located in the attic of the church annex. Although food and clothing is stored there, repair work and other activities must be done elsewhere.

Mr. Bone said that the church is considering expanding the project facilities.