

The DALLAS POST

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Eugene Florini, of Trucksville, examines his prescription package at Fino's Pharmacy in Dallas.

Seniors struggle in economy

By DAWN DRUMIN
Special to The Dallas Post

Shirley McDonald, 82, is typical of many area seniors seeking to make ends meet in an increasingly weak economy. A homemaker for 50 years, McDonald can't collect retirement. She does get Social Security, but it doesn't cover all of her needs.

She eats often at the Dallas Senior Center, which cuts down on the amount she needs to spend on groceries. The money she must pay for doctors' visits is more difficult to manage, she said, as she must come up with a \$75 co-payment each time she goes for a CAT scan to check if her lymphoma has returned.

Gerry Chicheletti, a waiver supervisor with the Luzerne & Wyoming Counties Bureau of Aging, noted that the costs of four necessities contribute to seniors' financial difficulties: heating, fuel, groceries and medication.

"Seniors have to decide, 'What will I be able to afford?'" Chicheletti explained, adding that many seniors must sacrifice one necessity to afford another.

Prescriptions and health-care costs are an especially significant concern for seniors and Dominick Fino, manager of Fino's Pharmacy in Dallas, has noticed a change in seniors' behavior regarding prescriptions.

"This past year, they're watching the co-pays more carefully, putting more co-pays on credit cards," he said.

Many insurance co-pays have increased since the beginning of the year. Nevertheless, Fino could not recall many cases in which his older customers skipped on medication to save on costs. Instead, more are requesting generic medications from their doctors.

Still others receive reduced prescription costs through PACE, a

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RON HILLARD, left, of Harveys Lake, stands with a Nicaraguan girl in March 2008. Hillard and other volunteers on a medical missionary trip to the country gave the girl, who has Down syndrome, a doll.

A mission to help others

By REBECCA BRIA
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Volunteers on the first Back Mountain Harvest Assembly medical missionary trip arrived in Nicaragua and found villagers with red stripes in their jet black hair, protruding abdomens and dark circles under their eyes.

The villagers weren't sporting trendy hairstyles, overweight or lacking sleep but were suffering from intestinal parasites, which resulted in stripping their hair of its pigmentation, malnourishment and other side effects.

A team organized through Back Mountain Harvest Assembly will head to Managua, Nicaragua from March 18 to March 25 for its third annual medical missionary trip. The 14 volunteers — comprised of seasoned nurses, pastors and a pharmacist of various churches and faiths — will provide medical care to people living in three villages on the outskirts of Managua.

People residing in a village that houses the Managua city dump depend on the garbage for a source of food and income. To persuade drivers to dump their loads of trash near their homes, parents will often sell their daughters to the drivers for sex. This year, an additional four volunteers will join the missionaries to do construction work on the Havellah House, a home for females who have been exploited in this way.



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A team of 14 volunteers organized through Back Mountain Harvest Assembly will head to Managua, Nicaragua from March 18 to March 25 for their third annual medical missionary trip. This year, an additional four volunteers will join the missionaries to do construction work on the Havellah House, a home for exploited females. From left, first row, are Mark Sherlock, Arleen Thomas, Lori Leggio and Charlie Makarewicz. Second row, Donna Giordano, Maude Geary, Betty Lawery and Fran Fink. Third row, Rodney Mahoney, Ron Hillard, Guy Giordano, Dave Oravitz, Christy Cuba, Debnnis Mahoney, Suzanne Hillard and Pastor Jack Rehill.

All of the volunteers will stay at the Buzbee Ministry, which provides them with secure housing.

Back Mountain Harvest Assembly com-

pleted an initial missionary trip to Nicaragua four years ago. The missionaries took underprivileged children to a camp for one week as a retreat from their environment.

Pastor Jack Rehill was told the area was in need of medical missions, so he approached Ron Hillard, director of the church's Hope Center, for help. The Hope Center provides free medical, legal and spiritual advice to people in need.

The following year, the church sent a team of missionaries to Nicaragua to treat sick villagers. Ron and Suzanne Hillard, of Harveys Lake, have been members of the mission team since the first medical trip two years ago.

Suzanne Hillard, a nurse for 35 years, says the team sees patients afflicted with parasites, malnourishment, infections and respiratory issues. Team members take with them a month's supply of vitamins for 600 people, plus antibiotics, creams and dressings.

"People come a day ahead of time to wait in line for us," Suzanne Hillard said. "We make sure we take them the anti-parasite medication and vitamins with iron, plus we have teaching about hygiene and such."

The missionaries contract out a Nicaraguan physician and five interpreters to assist with their operation. In 2008, they treated 565 people.

Visiting Nicaragua provides challenges for the volunteers as they each must pay their own way and have to purchase medicine. The missionaries must obtain permission from the Nicaraguan government to

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Caraway St. teaches Bible, Christian values

By REBECCA BRIA
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Colorful puppets, vibrant actors and song and dance keep children coming back to the Dallas Baptist Church every Wednesday evening.

But the children aren't just being entertained. They're learning about Christianity.

Melba Boudreaux, an administrative assistant at the church, recognized the need for a children's ministry several years ago and came across a production called Caraway Street. Founded by Texas residents Ron and Chris Solomon, Caraway Street is a copyrighted creation that uses actors and Sesame Street-like puppets called "little people" on the set of a street to teach children about the Bible and Christian values. Caraway Street is geared for children in preschool through fourth-grade.

Dallas Baptist Church purchased rights to Caraway Street four years ago and church members built the set from the Solomons' blueprints.

"We needed a children's program," said Boudreaux, director of Caraway Street at the church. "We needed to make learning fun for kids."

About 10 volunteer actors, who have been cleared through police background checks to ensure the safety of the children, meet for two hours each Sunday afternoon to prepare for the coming Wednesday's production.

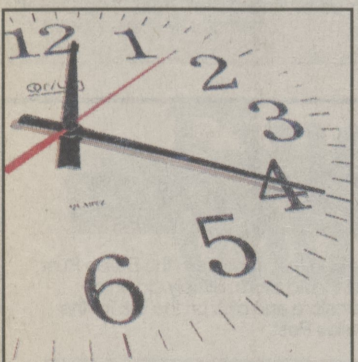
The theme on Feb. 25 was obeying the laws of God and the laws of man. Puppets and actors demonstrated why stealing or damaging items is wrong and how a police officer (played by Stan Oschman) can be helpful.

Joseph Chaga has been attend-

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Showing off some of the books of the Bible used during a segment of Caraway Street at the Dallas Baptist Church are, from left, Ariana Saxe, Stephanie Chaga and Lee Pagnotto.



SPRING FORWARD

Did you remember to set your clock ahead one hour before you went to bed last night? Daylight Savings Time began at 2:00 this morning.

