

Longtime Gleaners volunteer remembered

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By Henry Bury
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Frances Ann Mendes always had a smile and kind words for visitors to the Gleaners Food Bank and Michelangelo's Cafe over the past decade.

Her smile will continue to grace the basement of St. Michael's Church — even though her presence will be sorely missed by both organizations.

The 74-year-old Mendes volunteered right up to the last few weeks of her life. She died of cancer Dec. 10, 2004.

The Gleaners Food Bank has honoured Mendes by dedicating a plaque in her memory on the wall in the cafe.

The plaque contains a photograph of a smiling Mendes.

Her daughter, Margaret McIntyre, and family members were on hand for the unveiling of the plaque.

"I feel quite honoured and I think mom would be a little embarrassed, but pleased," she said.

McIntyre also presented the cafe with a watercolour painting of a Quinte-area barn in her mother's memory.

"She loved barns and the countryside and I'm pleased to donate this in her honour," she said.

McIntyre said her mother has

been a lifelong volunteer, starting in her native West Indies and later in Ontario.

"She had good faith in God and she felt compelled to help the less fortunate ... that's part of who my mother was," she said.

Mendes moved to the McNabb Towers in Belleville 14 years ago and has volunteered for such organizations as St. Vincent de Paul, CNIB, Salvation Army, Living Hope Meals and the Belleville pregnancy crisis centre.

She began with Gleaners in the mid-1990s and switched to the cafe four years ago. Both are located in the basement of St. Michael's Church.

Susanne Quinlan said volunteers don't come any better than Mendes.

"I was delighted to see Frances come in the door as a volunteer," said the director of operations for Gleaners.

"She was a reliable and caring volunteer and has been right to the end."

Danuta Jagaciak, the cafe's co-ordinator, knew Mendes for the past three years and all the volunteers became good friends.

"I think all the friends of the cafe are happy to see Frances' photograph here," she said. "And I think she would also enjoy knowing that we still talk about her and remember her."



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY HENRY BURY

Frances Ann Mendes, a longtime Gleaners and Michelangelo's Cafe volunteer, was honoured by having her photograph/dedication plaque placed on a wall there.

Participating the brief ceremony were Mendes' daughter, Margaret McIntyre, centre, and granddaughter, Sydney Ann, and cafe co-ordinator Danuta Jagaciak.

MENDES, FRANCES ANN