

LOCAL NEWS

Colborne home on Christmas Eve

\$650 was collected for the family Christmas Eve. We also prayed for each family member by name during the service."

"Our phone never stopped ringing," Brenda Dhaene says. "We must have had 20 calls within hours on Christmas Eve from people calling to see what the family needed, if they were safe, how they could help. In fact, our phone is still ringing with calls."

Mr. Prentice, a long-time organizer and community volunteer with the Food Bank, contacted his daughter Cathy Edison at Downey Guardian Pharmacy as firefighters were fighting the

blaze. Cathy contacted United Church Minister David Timpson and the scooped cartons of food to delivery to the homeless family.

"This community was just amazing," the Dhaene's say.

"I have half a garage full of clothes waiting until they are set- tled again," Mr. Dhaene says.

"The downtown merchants in Colborne called to say they would open their businesses so the Klinaftakis' could get whatever they needed: the drug store, Becker's. Amazing," says Brenda.

During the discussion Friday morning, someone called to say Northumberland Mall gift-certifi- cates for the family were on their

way.

Up the street from the fire, homeowner Cary Day immedi- ately offered the family a vacant basement apartment for lodging. The family is currently lodged there.

In the days since Christmas Eve, real estate agent Tony Dekeyser has been working on finding a rental property for the family.

"Tom wants to say thank you to everybody in the community. He's overwhelmed by the sup- port," John Dhaene says. "He particularly wants to thank the Brighton and Cramahne Fire Fighters, the generous donors

and businesses."

Mr. Klinaftakis is a single father raising the six children. A truck driver, he has been of work for the past few months with an ankle injury. In a one-two punch for the family, Christmas Day brought news the children's maternal grandfather passed away.

"You know, Don and I have just been talking," John Ruther- ford said as he talked withy Dohn prentice in downtown Colborne Friday morning. "One of the chil- dren, four years old, said to Don, 'You know, Mr Prentice, we lost everything but Santa still came.'"

Convenience store donations for fire victims reach \$1,100

The fire was still hours away from being extinguished at the Klinaftakis home at 17 Percy Street Christmas Eve when Terry and Jen Lee at Colborne's Mister Convenience store sprang to action.

"The fire had been burning about two hours. We decided to put a collection bin on the counter," Terry Lee says. The Lees know the family of six children and their father well. They would frequently drop into the store located just a block from their home.

The donations were immediate and spontaneous.

"You know, people were buying a \$1 item and putting \$20 into the pot," Mr. Lee says. "That really impressed me. You think of a big retail store where people might be spending a lot of money and then contribute \$5 or \$10 to a collection on the way out, but it was just the opposite here."

Terry decided to count and turn over the contributions to date Tom Klinaftakis at 9:30 a.m. Monday, December 30. Terry knew there was quite a bit on money in the large plastic Double Bubble gum container.

"I wanted the count to be wit- nessed so our customers would know how much was collected and that it was all turned over," he said.

Staff member Kelli Griffis came in on her own time to help count the cash. There were literally hun- dreds and hundreds of dollars in bills and coins. It took an hour to reach the final tally: \$796.45 - which Mr. Lee rounded up to \$1,100!

"We're doing well. Everyone's fine," Tom Klinaftakis assured Monday morning.

The family is considering rebuilding their insured home. A present, the six children, aged one through 13 years, and Tom are liv- ing in an apartment just up the road from their burned home.

"Thank you," a teary Tom says to the Lee's, Mr. Convenience staff and all the customers who have come through for the family.

- MANDY MARTIN



CUSTOMER CONTRIBUTIONS

Terry Lee and Kelli Griffis were kept busy for nearly an hour counting all the change and paper bill donations to the Klinaftakis fund at the Mr. Convenience Store in Colborne. \$1,100 was collected between Christ- mas Eve and the morning of December 30.

PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN

COLBORNE CHRONICLE JAN. 2/03



PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN

Six children and their father, Tom Klinaftakis, are left homeless after a Christmas Eve fire in Colborne.