

Derry's Community Caregivers lends a hand to needy

By **HUNTER McGEE**
Union Leader Correspondent

DERRY — Community Caregivers of Greater Derry is reaching out across international borders to donate excess medical supplies to the needy in the Dominican Republic and Republic of Haiti.

Through its Loaner's Closet program, the nonprofit organization on East Broadway in the Masonic Temple building donated surplus items such as canes and crutches earlier this month, said Cindee Tanuma, executive director.

The loaner's closet is a room filled with crutches, walkers, canes and dozens of pieces of other medical equipment. More than 5,000

pieces are on loan to the public. The items are donated each month.

But the program frequently receives too much equipment from donations, and the closet is often filled to capacity, Tanuma said.

"It's hard to fit another walker or crutches," she said.

Community Caregivers began working with a Massachusetts nonprofit organization called the International Foundation for Humanitarian Relief Aid about two years ago. Rafael Subero, the founder and president, stops by periodically to collect extra medical supplies and have them shipped to the needy in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

"I'm glad that the people in New Hampshire are helping so many poor people, so many special people in the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti," Subero said after filling the trailer with the items.

Subero said it can be overwhelming sometimes to see the reaction of the poor and needy when they receive the crutches and other supplies.

"We all cry when we see those things," Subero said.

Along with the medical supplies, Subero said his organization can use equipment that may be obsolete or broken. It also accepts such items as paint, fire equipment, school supplies and building materials.

Caregivers began in 1983

when a group of people from the community and local churches came together to found the organization after seeing a need for volunteer services to supplement existing programs, Tanuma said.

Volunteers strive to help the elderly, disabled, chronically and temporarily ill stay in their own homes and communities as long as possible, she said. They assist with such tasks as medical transports, light chores, grocery shopping, friendly visiting, yard work and home upkeep.

For more information about Caregivers, call 432-0877 or go to comcaregivers.org.

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Excess crutches that are being donated through Community Caregivers of Greater Derry are loaded into a waiting trailer. The items will be shipped to the poor and needy in the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti.

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