

Community Caregivers of Greater Derry Pays it Forward

PENNY WILLIAMS
NUTFIELD NEWS

Residents often donate used medical equipment and supplies to the Community Caregivers of Greater Derry, which operates a Loaners Closet filled with walkers, canes, crutches, and wheelchairs at the Derry Masonic Lodge. Caregivers loans out its equipment to clients in need, with the only proviso that it be returned when no longer needed. That cycle of giving, sharing, and caring is the core of the Caregivers.

But people's generosity is sometimes overwhelming, and the Loaners Closet gets jam packed. When this happens, Caregivers seeks out those in need of the extra equipment, such as Haiti.

Donna Kluk is the Loaners Closet coordinator, and said she was at her wit's end two weeks ago and had approved giving away some of the equipment for scrap metal to create space. Then the phone rang and Rafael

Subero said he heard the group had excess equipment to give away.

Kluk said she started pulling out the excess walkers, canes, crutches, commodes, gauze, alcohol prep pads, first aid items, adult diapers, nebulizers and diabetes test strips. Subero arrived to pick up the items to ship them to the Dominican Republic through his International Foundation for Humanitarian Aid.

Subero said for about two decades, he personally collected things needed by the poor in the Dominican Republic and transported them there, to be distributed to those in need. A couple of years ago, he founded his non-profit organization as a means of doing more. Before creating the foundation, he worked to improve food services and provide health services, job training for youths, protect natural resources in the region and improve the rights of women.

Working with Subero on Tuesday, July 10, when he came to Derry to pick up the overflow equipment was Rocco DeFillipo, vice president of the Lynn, Mass., Restaurant Association, one of the partnerships formed to expand and improve the services the Foundation can provide. The two men brought the equipment from the Loaners Closet and loaded it onto the trailer, the first step in its journey to the Dominican Republic.

Just before Subero arrived, Caregivers had received a call from another organization with a lot of medical equipment it wanted to donate. And now that Subero has taken the overflow, the Loaners Closet has space to accept this latest donation.

Community Caregivers provides free assistance to frail, elderly, temporarily or permanently disabled and individuals recuperating from



Rafael Subero created the International Foundation for Humanitarian Aid, which provides medical equipment, food, building and construction help to those in need in the Dominican Republic. He is pictured at right with Rocco DiFillipo, vice president of the Lynn, Mass., Restaurant Association, and Community Caregivers of Greater Derry Loaners Closet coordinator Donna Kluk. *Photo by Penny Williams*

or dealing with chronic illness in the towns of Derry, Londonderry, Windham, Sandown, Chester, Hampstead and Danville. Services in addition to the loaner's

closet include transportation, friendly visiting, errands, grocery shopping, light chores, limited respite care, and referrals.

For more information, call Caregivers at 432-0877 or visit its office weekdays at the Derry Masonic Temple, 58 East Broadway.