

## Catholic Charities

Diocese of Joliet

*"Love works miracles every day"*

Marguerite DeValois

## *Miracle Moments . . .*



A series of unexpected events turned Jerome and Brenda's life upside down. It was especially difficult for Jerome who has spent a large portion of his life caring for others as a father, husband, and Certified Nurse's Assistant. "I am used to helping others and here I was in need of someone to help me," Jerome said.

After having raised five children and currently enjoying their beautiful grandchildren, what happened to bring Jerome and Brenda to the streets and living out of their rented car? This is their story . . .

Jerome began one workday in January unaware that by the end of that day he would be going home to tell his lovely wife he was out of a job. He also found himself filing for Workmen's Compensation for an injury he suffered that same day. He hired an attorney to help with his case while attempting to find a new job. Three months later, attorney fees, mortgage payments, and no steady income forced

Jerome to foreclose on his mortgage and move to an apartment.

It took Jerome another three months to find a new job at a nursing home but his income was not sufficient to pay the full rent every month. While Jerome did receive a settlement check from his Workmen's Compensation case, the funds were not enough to cover his rent payments.

Thankfully, his new landlord was more than accommodating for six months. But there was no rest for the weary. The back rent situation caused their landlord to evict Jerome and Brenda from their apartment. To add to the humbling experience, the sheriff came to their home to force them out and into the streets.

While Jerome continued working, Brenda kept warm at public places and at night they would go to P.A.D.S. Many stresses continued to plague Jerome, including answering co-worker questions about his living situation.

Thankfully, God is always with us and he sent a Good Samaritan their way. She suggested they try contacting Catholic Charities' Hope House. Hope House is a shelter for situationally homeless individuals and families in need of a job and a new place to live.

Jerome and Brenda became residents at Hope House. During their seven week stay they were helped by caring staff. "The staff at Hope House helped us every step of the way," said Jerome. This was especially true of Melissa and Madeline, their crisis counselors, who not only helped them find a place to live, but helped them access other resources too.

Jerome and Brenda now live in an apartment where the rent is reasonable and they can finally get back on their feet. According to Jerome, "Catholic Charities is an angel of the Lord down here on earth."