

## Daily Rest Christmas was bright

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SENECA — Christmas is a time for cheer, but it's not so easy to enjoy the holidays when life's struggles continue to win out.



**A resident at Our Daily Rest lies down to enjoy the festive Christmas tree. This year, donations of clothing, toys and food were strong according to Executive Director Steve Smith.**

At Our Daily Rest homeless shelter in Seneca residents had a chance this Christmas to embrace the season, thanks to generous community members, devoted staff members and their own families.

According to Executive Director Steve Smith, 2011 was quieter than years past, but still a success.

“A lot of our residents were able to go and spend the holiday with their own families, which was nice for them. We like to see our residents maintain relationships with kin. It's important for their own success,” Smith said.

For those who did stay at the transitional shelter for the weekend, Smith's wife stuffed stockings with lots of goodies for everyone, as she has done each year since it opened.

Smith noted that many community members came by and donated toys and clothes to the children currently residing at Our Daily Rest, most of whom are under the age of 5.

“There has been no shortage of donations, which is pretty normal for the month of December,” he added. “Food and clothing donations have been really strong.”

Throughout the month, numerous churches held canned food drives, which has helped the shelter save money and feed its residents plentifully. However, financial donations are always needed, even after a recent concert success at The Vault in Seneca.

“The concert was a chance for us to thank all the folks that continue to support us,” he said. “Let's face it, without this generous community, we'd never be able to do what we do.”

The concert raised \$4,500, which was matched (by a donor) to reach \$9,000, he added.

“Financially, we are better off than we were a couple of months ago, but we are still looking to pay down our \$1 million mortgage, which accounts for one-third of our budget, he said.”

Just up the road, the Golden Corner Food Bank, operating out of a new facility off of Wells Highway, had a donor come through and pay off its entire mortgage.

“That's what we are hoping for,” he said. “It makes me jealous.

“Since opening our doors over two years ago, we have assisted 450 clients with shelter, food, clothing, case management and transportation. Of those clients, 100 were children under the age of 10. **We have been** very successful in transitioning these people from a desperate homeless situation to independent living. We have been able to provide this service with financial donations from the local community’s churches, businesses and individuals whom we depend upon to maintain our operations.”