

Our Lady of Sorrows spreads joy

In the bitter cold, Charlie Fink and volunteers from the South County Faith Network built a large ramp for an elderly man who was having trouble getting in and out of his house.

About three years ago Father Mark Logue, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows, Owensville, asked Mr. Fink, a retired nuclear engineer and active parishioner, to serve as chairman for the parish group that was becoming involved with the SCFN. SCFN is an organization for seniors who need help doing anything from grocery shopping to home repairs.

The organization is made up of 13 different Episcopal, Methodist and Catholic churches in the South County area. Many of the seniors who ask for help are in their 80s and 90s while the volunteers are in their 60s and 70s, said Susan Haine, project director, with a chuckle.

“Some of our volunteers say it puts their lives in perspective,” said Ms. Haine. “Many of our clients are just wonderful people, and our volunteers become very fond of them.”

The group recently built two ramps in about three days, said Mr. Fink with pride in his voice. He said the group has replaced hot water heaters, repaired weather stripping and even cleaned out a mobile home belonging to an elderly woman.

“It took six truck loads, but we did it,” said Mr. Fink. “A ramp can cost up to \$6,000, but we do it for about \$800.

To keep the cost of projects low, the organization relies on materials and monetary donations. Mr. Fink said there are about seven or eight men and women from Our Lady of Sorrows who volunteer their time and talent.

“We try to assure them that no experience is required,” said Mr. Fink. “Some people are needed to sit with seniors while their caregivers are out running errands.”

According to Ms. Haine, many of the organization’s clients don’t have family in the area to help them with these needs. The population of seniors in Anne Arundel

County is very high, but South County has a higher percentage and is projected to grow, she said.

“It is very important for them to stay in their homes for as long as they can,” said Ms. Haine. “In life you feel that you give and give and nothing registers, but our clients are so grateful and it is very rewarding.”