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Helping in the healing

Ministry assists grieving families at parish

by KATHLEEN HEALY SCHMIEDER

correspondent

HENDERSONVILLE — “Rose’s Ministry helps begin the healing process,” said Sandy Donecho, a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church in Hendersonville.

When her mother, Rose Fiumara, died last year on May 15, Donecho realized how important the support offered by her parish family was in her grieving and healing process.

“The day of her funeral, when friends, family and the people from the parish came together, someone asked me if there was anything available at the church (for families),” said Donecho.

She found her grief leading to action.

“We called it Rose’s Ministry because it was at the reception for my mother that the Holy Spirit gave me the idea,” said Donecho.

This June, the ministry will celebrate its first anniversary with a bi-annual potluck luncheon at the church.

Over the past year, upon request the ministry — funded entirely through donations and comprised of eight teams, each consisting of at least 10 volunteers — has served several parish families by providing cake and coffee receptions after funeral Masses.

Wearing aprons embroidered with a single red rose, the volunteers offer compassionate service by allowing grieving families to share the consolation of friends and family at the church while all the preparation for and clean up of the receptions are handled for them.

“People who are grieving feel embraced through this,” said Donecho. “We need that healing process; without it we can’t move on. What better place for it to begin than here (at Immaculate Conception)?”

Donecho contacted local funeral homes to help inform Catholics about Rose’s Ministry. When there is an interest, Donecho is contacted and a team is put into place to handle all the details for the family.

“There has been a need for a long time,” said Mary Ann Owens, co-chair of one of the teams of volunteers. “Sandy’s mom passed and the Lord used her to start this.”

Donecho said the ministry is one of comfort and support.

“Through embracing your faith, you bring people close to your heart,” she said. “Here it’s like a hug from Jesus.”

WANT MORE INFO?

For more information on Rose’s Ministry, contact Sandy Donecho at (828) 697-7420. Those interested are welcome to join members and new volunteers at the luncheon at Immaculate Conception Church at 12 p.m. June 11.