



SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DONATIONS SOUGHT TO HELP DISABLED ADULTS WITH SMALL NECESSITIES

HICKORY -- Catawba County residents are encouraged to make a donation to the Grace McLeod Fund, which will make life easier for low-income elderly or disabled persons served by Adult Services Programs of Catawba County Social Services.

Items purchased through the fund are limited to \$50 or less and are not covered by Medicaid or any other source.

Rodney Franklin, the social work supervisor who oversees the fund, said, "The fund is running low, and we hope Catawba County residents will open their hearts to meet this need."

The items purchased can be as simple as a basket for a walker, a blood pressure monitor, or a "grabber" that allows a person in a wheelchair to reach items on a high shelf. In one case, the fund was used to buy an electric can opener for a county resident with severe arthritis.

The Grace McLeod Fund, named in memory of an Adult Services Program manager, is maintained through donations from the public. The social worker assisting the disabled person submits the request, which is reviewed and approved by a social work supervisor. The client receiving the item signs a form when it is delivered.

"We try to use the fund wisely," said Franklin. Sometimes the client is living at home with a caretaker. In these cases, the fund may help purchase a monitor so that the caretaker can keep watch on an elderly or disabled relative. Other times, the fund has been used to purchase door chimes to alert a relative that a patient with dementia has opened an outside door.

Grace McLeod, after whom the fund is named, began working at Catawba County Social Services in 1985 as a Social Worker III, Community Alternatives Program case manager, helping elderly and disabled citizens remain at home rather than moving to a nursing home. In 1993, she was promoted to manager of the Adult Services Program. Under her leadership, the division grew to include 60 employees and more than 20 different programs.

"Although we receive most of our donations right before Christmas, there is a year-round need," Franklin said. Anyone wishing to make a donation may do so online by going to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/dss> and clicking on the red "Donate Now" button. Just select the Grace McLeod Adult Services Fund from the drop-down menu. Donations may also be made by check. Please

make the check payable to Catawba County Social Services and indicate "Grace McLeod Fund" in the memo line. The mailing address is Catawba County Social Services, P.O. Box 669, Newton, NC 28658. For additional information about the Grace McLeod Fund and how you or your organization can help, contact Rodney Franklin at 828-695-5619 or rodney@catawbacountync.gov.

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