

Several years ago Bunny Martin and her family began recycling cans. If cans can be recycled, she thought, why can't love? That is how Recycled Love began its ministry in a small Wesleyan church in southern Michigan.

This type of ministry can be started in any community on a small or a large scale. Unity in the community is what makes the program work. Individuals, schools, churches, nursing homes and other community resources contact Recycled Love with a need. Volunteers fill that need and at the same time fill other needs as well.

For example: flowers from funeral homes, churches or parties are taken apart, rearranged and delivered to shut-ins, the sick or the lonely.

One brisk spring morning a group of young people from Recycled Love's community brought several animals from the animal shelter to an elderly residential home. This served three purposes: the animals were let out of locked cages; residents were thrilled to fill their lonely day with kids and pets; and the youth had an opportunity to reach out to others. A fourth purpose was counted at the end of the day when a resident adopted a cat.

Among meeting needs of individuals and community programs, Recycled Love also travels long hours once a month to provide food and clothing to St. Leo's soup kitchen in Detroit. Donations of food, clothing, toys and personal need products are stored in a volunteer's home.

Harry, a homeless man

Recycled Love

Unity in the Community

by Nina Ward

from St. Leo's kitchen, looks forward to the visits from the volunteers. "Suicide used to be an option for me," says Harry. "But someone cares enough to help me and someone listens when I need to talk."

Harry found a friend from Recycled Love. But most important, after listening to his friend talk about God, he soon found another friend, Jesus.

Care-a-thon workshops are sponsored by Recycled Love volunteers. Hands-on experience is used to teach others how to make flowers, craft toys and other needed items. Love baskets are filled with personal items or toys, which will be distributed to a needy person.

A little caring, a little sharing is all it takes to witness to the love of Christ. By being God's hands and feet, we can put love in motion.

So many people do not know how to love back because they have never been loved. People like Harry are amazed that someone would care. Recycled Love is retrieving used items, repairing clothes, furniture or appliances, crafting, or baking for someone who needs to feel that there is a God. Recycled Love is using what God has so graciously given us and seeing how far we can stretch it. How pleased God must feel to know that we so appreciate how He takes care of our needs that we would extend ourselves and our blessings to another child of His. **W**



Under a poster that reads, "Love isn't love till you give it away," Bunny Martin picks up a love basket filled with items that she will bring to someone special who needs God's love. Author Nina Ward attends the Wesleyan church in Cadillac, Michigan.