



## **Local groups to provide more than 500 Thanksgiving dinners**

Erie, PA --- November 20, 1997 --- A group of local organizations is celebrating a special anniversary in 1997. It is the eleventh consecutive year they are helping make Thanksgiving happier for needy families throughout the Erie area.

Individuals from Erie Insurance Group, Catholic Charities, the Erie Cursillo Movement, Our Lady of Mercy Choir, St. Mark Church in Lawrence Park, General Electric Company's Erie operations and Harborcreek Youth Services are involved in an effort that is expected to result in the distribution of more than 500 complete Thanksgiving dinners to Erie area families. This is General Electric's first year to take part in the program, with first-, second- and third-shift employees expected to participate.

The program is headed by Rick and Jane Hinman, who organize the effort on behalf of all the groups involved. Rick, a vice president at Erie Insurance Group, notes that this idea began when he and his wife delivered one dinner to Catholic Charities ten years ago. "We started telling others about it and by the third year we had twenty five dinners donated," he said. Last year the organizations were responsible for the delivery of more than 460 dinners. Including the dinners to be delivered in 1997, the effort will have touched the lives of over 2,000 families in its ten year history.

Preparation for the meal collection begins in September when the Hinmans contact Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Erie. Catholic Charities contacts local social service agencies to determine the number of dinners each needs. The organizations benefitting from the donations coordinate their individual pick up and delivery of meals to their respective families.

The dinners come from individuals, families and employee groups who purchase all of the food items for a complete Thanksgiving dinner. Dinners donated by St. Mark's Parish, the Cursillo Movement, Harborcreek Youth Services, General Electric employees and the Our Lady of Mercy Choir will be delivered on Monday, November 24.

The Erie Insurance "horseshoe" entrance on East Fifth Street between French and Holland becomes a staging area for meal collections on Tuesday, November 25, 1997, from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. It's in that area that approximately 200 meals are delivered, boxed and ultimately taken to Catholic Charities. This represents half of the nearly 400 meals to be donated by Erie Insurance Employees alone.

Hinman notes that without the involvement of Catholic Charities a program this size could not be possible. "They provide a key link between those who contribute the dinners and the needy families who receive them," he said.