

CHRISTMAS ANGEL

Retired pastor steps into servant's role

BY MARY WICOFF
Commercial-News

DANVILLE — If the Rev. Dave Garver sees someone who looks like he's having a bad day, he'll stop and ask, "Is there something you'd like me to pray for?"

"You can tell by their sighs," he said. "A lot of people carry a lot of burdens."

That concern for others — both on an individual basis and on a larger community-wide scale — has resulted in Garver being chosen as one of seven Commercial-News angels.

Garver said he was honored and surprised to be named an angel. However, he said modestly, "'Angel' might be overstating it."

He said, "I've been blessed by people who have been good to me and I want to be good to others."

Shirley Miller of Westville nominated Garver, who retired in 2007 as pastor of Ridgeview Baptist Church.

While he was at Ridgeview, she wrote, "He was a community pastor, giving of himself over and over."

Now, she said, "He may be retired, and we no longer can call him 'Pastor Dave,' but we know he is still giving of himself to better our city of Danville."

Since retirement, Garver has stepped up his involvement in several organizations, including Habitat for Humanity and the West Downtown Neighborhood Group. Plus, he continues to be active at Ridgeview.

His wife, Carol, said, "When you retire from the ministry, you don't stop caring about people. You don't have to be in leadership to be used by God. You can serve in small ways."

That's how Garver sees his role — he's no longer a leader, but a servant.

Garver has been involved in Habitat for Humanity since its beginning in 1986. This summer, he went to the work sites and did manual labor, such as sweeping up debris and putting up drywall, along with other volunteers.

This year, both Ridgeview and Second Church of Christ partnered with Habitat to erect houses at 1010 and 1006 Chandler St. A partner pays half of the cost of the home, while Habitat pays the rest.

He and Carol also became involved



Carol and Dave Garver relax in their home in downtown Danville. Dave Garver is a Christmas Angel.
Susan Joy McKinney/Commercial-News

in the neighborhood group when they moved into an historic home on Pine Street in July 2007. The house was completely restored by Renaissance Danville.

"We've really been inspired by our neighborhood group," Carol said. "It's been a privilege to be part of it."

Living in a Renaissance house, Garver said, is their way of contributing to the community and helping renew the neighborhood.

"We chose to continue to stay in Danville," he said.

At Ridgeview, he and Carol cook a meal on Wednesday nights for about 60 people who attend programs at the church, such as Bible study and choir practice. The Garvers do all the cooking, but get help with cleanup.

Even then, Garver uses that opportunity to listen to people.

He's in the handbell choir, sings in the choir and is involved in mission projects, such as going to Thailand in 2004.

Sometimes he'll fill in for Senior Pastor Mark Keyser.

Garver also is a member of the

Sunrise Rotary Club, serves on the board of the Center for Children's Services, and has been involved in the CROP Walk.

In addition, he participates in HALO projects, such as the painting blitz in June and raking leaves in October. He also has taken part in the Big Brothers Big Sisters bowl-a-thon and delivers Meals on Wheels.

"We have stayed really busy," he said, referring to himself and Carol, who's also involved in many activities. "I don't want to sit home."

Carol retired last year from Southwest Elementary School as an art teacher and is involved in the Danville Art League. At Ridgeview, she's a deaconess and has taught Sunday school classes.

When they're not involved in community projects, the couple tries to see their grandchildren as much as possible — two are in St. Joseph and three are out of state. They have four grown daughters.

This is one of seven profiles of area residents who have been chosen as Christmas "angels" for their service to the community.