

# You Can Help

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## CRISIS ASSISTANCE MINISTRY

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Every Saturday, the Observer will feature a local charity that needs your help as it reaches out to others during these difficult economic times.

Tom Walsh had long admired the work of Crisis Assistance Ministry, but a visit there last year inspired a special gift from him.

"I really fell in love with the place," he recalls. He was especially struck by learning that 70 percent of the people Crisis helps need the organization's assistance just once instead of being chronically needy.



Walsh

"These are people who have a problem, the problem is solved and they don't see them again."

Walsh decided to put up \$150,000 with a challenge to the community to match it at various levels.

The result of the campaign was impressive.

"It helped us raise over \$265,000 from individuals, in addition to his benevolence," said Doug Hartjes, development officer of Crisis Assistance Ministry.

The organization has held Match Challenge drives for 11 years, and Walsh's was the largest gift yet. Walsh, 71, a retired chemistry professor at UNC Charlotte, said his gift is part of his share of the sale of a golf course in Illinois partly owned by his family.

Hartjes said the money will go directly to the work of Crisis, which last year helped over 42,000 people, almost half of them children. They received financial assistance to avoid eviction or loss of utility service.

A free store also offers clothing, housewares, furniture and major appliances, serving an additional 30,000 people in need last year.

Hartjes said people are welcome to donate their time, skills and money to support the work of Crisis. A good way to learn about its work and mission, he says, is via the Web site: [www.crisisassistance.org](http://www.crisisassistance.org). Crisis Assistance Ministry, 500-A Spratt St., Charlotte, NC 28206; (704) 371-3000. — NANCY BRACHEY