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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rich Mercure was beginning to notice a recurring theme. In his role as a volunteer driver for Faith in Action of McHenry County (FIAMC), Mercure routinely heard how FIAMC care receivers needed to purchase a cane or walker to use for a short term injury, and then never used the item again once the medical condition improved. Mercure had an idea. Why not gather up all of the secondhand canes, walkers, and other durable medical equipment in the area and take them to a convenient location where the senior population of McHenry County could assess the items free of charge? Mercure proposed the concept to FIAMC Executive Director, Rhonda Anderson and the Durable Medical Equipment Loan Closet was born.

"I immediately saw the potential and value for having a Durable Medical Equipment Loan Closet," says Anderson. "The only thing we were lacking was space to store the items, or the finances to rent the space to store the items."

Enter St. Paul's Episcopal Church in McHenry, who due to a generous endowment to the church was able to grant FIAMC \$2500 for this project. The grant allows for the rental of a storage unit on Route 120 in McHenry. "Our mission is to make a difference," says Father Jim Swarhout in regard to St. Paul's. "Although I was not a decision maker on the grant selection, I was pleased to see that FIAMC was one of the recipients. At St. Paul's we want to involve ourselves in the total breath of our community and I would say that prior to partnering with FIAMC, we weren't ministering to the seniors in our community to any great extent. I think that those on our committee saw the broad stroke of what FIAMC is doing out there in our community and how it is impacting the lives of seniors in McHenry County."

FIAMC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing no-cost services to care recipients, 60 years of age and older who are living in their own home, apartment, or with a family member in McHenry County. The organization which provides services such as friendly home visits and phone calls, shopping and errands, home maintenance and repairs, light yard work, light household chores, respite services and daily assurance calls, is committed to keeping McHenry County senior adults in their homes for as long as possible. Anderson sees the Durable Medical Equipment Loan Closet as another valuable service that FIAMC can provide to bring autonomy to the elderly in the McHenry County community.

The grant from St. Paul's allows for an initial 'Closet' to be available in McHenry beginning this month. FIAMC with the help of Mercure has already had donations of walks, canes, crutches, stocking installer grabbers and is accepting donations of items,

as well as recipients to accept the donations. FIAMC plans to open another site in McHenry in the future.

“The idea is not to store these items,” says Mercure. “We’d rather people use them.”

To donate items, or borrow donated items to the Durable Medical Equipment Loan Closet, please call FIAMC at 815 455 3120.