

THE DAILY ITEM

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Mother of 3 Can't Afford Medicine for Herself

By Amanda Keister
The Daily Item

WHITE DEER — Between rising heating costs and sporadic child support payments, Lisa and her three children are looking at a bleak Christmas this year.

"I pay all the utilities. I pay my own rent. I have a car payment," said Lisa, 36, who asked that her name not be used. "And when you ask for help from LIHEAP low-income energy assistance program they say you make too much money, but yet you are barely paying your bills."

Because her child support payments have been ordered by the court, the money is figured into her income — whether she actually receives it or not.

"I am so tired of people saying you making too much money — please," she said. "Each month I'm worried about how high the electric bill is going to be, which bill can I put off paying this month so that my kids can have heat."

Her full-time job as a bookkeeper and personal assistant just doesn't provide enough. Lisa is supposed to undergo surgery but has been unable to because she has no medical insurance.

She can't afford to fill her prescriptions for blood pressure and nerves. Lisa has only recently obtained insurance for 15-year-old Sean and 13-year-old Sara through the Children's Health Insurance Program, and 9-year-old

Michael receives some Social Security benefits due to his autism.

"All that goes into medication," Lisa said of Michael's benefits. "Some pills aren't covered. One costs over \$200 a month. He takes 17 pills a day."

Although Michael is not able to comprehend his mother's tenuous financial situation, Sean and Sara are keenly aware of the problems.

"No parent likes for their child to know what kind of financial hurt they are in," Lisa said. "Especially when the kids go to school and their friends have this and that."

For Christmas this year, Sean is hoping for some PlayStation 2 games while Sara is hoping for a Pixelchick. Lisa would like some educational toys for Michael.

"If we have a decent meal and one or two things under the tree, we're going to be happy," she said.

Recent donations to the fund are as follows: Dennis and Janet Tippett, Selinsgrove, \$300; Theodore L. Wilson, Selinsgrove, \$50; Statewide Tax Recovery Inc., Sunbury, \$1,500; Central Credit Audit Inc., Sunbury, \$1,500; Ron and Suzanne Ivanitch, Sunbury; \$100; Clifford Yohn, Sunbury, \$100; Carl and JoAnne Bonnell, Northumberland, \$50; Jeanette and Richard Williams, Lewisburg, \$150; anonymous donations, \$120.