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House chores have a value: \$369,000

Estimated by an expert,
injury lawsuit includes
damages for inability
to do domestic tasks

By FRANK DONNELLY
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Some might say you can't put a dollar figure on the household chores a person does.

But an economist did — and the cash value is eye-popping.

A former housekeeper at an Arrochar convent has settled her civil lawsuit for \$750,000 for injuries suffered when she was hit by a car — after an expert estimated damages

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of more than \$369,000 for her inability to perform household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping, said her lawyer John G. O'Leary.

Helena Rozanska alleged her arm was so badly fractured in the Feb. 24, 2006, accident that she could not return to work or perform her own household chores. Ms. Rozanska, then 61, was employed as a housekeeper in the St. Joseph Hill Convent of the Order of the Daughters of Divine Charity.

"People don't realize the things in their daily lifestyles that are affected by serious injuries," said O'Leary, a partner in the

West Brighton law firm of O'Leary, McMahon & Spero. "The greatest value of her loss was from her inability to perform her household services."

All together, Ms. Rozanska alleged more than \$952,000 in economic damages, including wages, fringe benefits and household services. The \$369,000 loss of household services, as projected by economist Jeffrey M. Siedenberg, represented the cost to pay someone to perform those tasks for Ms. Rozanska for the remainder of her life, O'Leary said.

The Brooklyn resident also sought compensation for pain and suffering. She suffered "multiple, complete displaced" fractures of her left arm, along with a torn rotator cuff and required surgery, court papers said.

Ms. Rozanska could not be reached for comment.

According to court papers, the accident occurred at 7:15 p.m. at the intersection of North Burgher and Forest

avenues. Ms. Rozanska was walking along Forest toward Port Richmond. As she was crossing North Burgher, a car driven by Richard Montalbano hit her, O'Leary said. Montalbano was Silver Lake-bound on Forest when he turned left onto North Burgher. Both the pedestrian and auto had a green light.

O'Leary said an eyewitness said Ms. Rozanska was "walking squarely within the crosswalk and had the right of way" when the accident occurred.

Montalbano, however, contended Ms. Rozanska was not in the crosswalk and had walked out from behind a parked car into his path, said O'Leary.

Ms. Rozanska sued Montalbano and Elrac Inc., doing business as Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Montalbano had leased the Mercury automobile he was driving from Enterprise.

The case settled during trial in state Supreme Court, St. George, with the help of Justice Philip G. Minardo, said O'Leary.

A lawyer for Montalbano and Enterprise did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

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