

Douglassville woman brings warmth to those in need

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"I can't cure cancer, or the common cold, but I can do this."

With those words and a determined spirit, Douglassville resident Betty Clark decided she wanted to do something to help some Berks County residents have a warmer winter year.

Clark has organized a coat drive, in an effort to get coats to men, women and children who are homeless, or otherwise struggling, and who might not have access to a coat for the winter.

"I was in a Bible study this summer, and we were talking about changing the world. It inspired me," Clark said. "It's always better to do something instead of nothing. I knew that this was something I could do."



News photo by Donna Rovins: Betty Clark, left and her helpers Eleanor Geyer and Richard Templin help sort some of the coats that have been collected so far.

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So Clark got started. She is a member of Alice Focht United Methodist Church in Birdsboro, so she made arrangements to use the church as a place to store the coats and distribute them.

"At first, I wasn't sure if I could even collect 10 coats, but then I set my goal to collecting 50. I was hoping we could get to that point."

Clark has already collected at least 60 coats, and the "official" coat collection day isn't even here yet.

There are two dates for the drive. Coats can be dropped off at Alice Focht UMC on Saturday, Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

People in need of coats can pick them up at the church the following Saturday, Oct. 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Clark is a woman with a purpose and seemingly endless energy, sharing flyers with people she meets while walking her dog, and talking with friends and acquaintances.

She has driven miles over the last month to pick up coats, sweaters and blankets she has been offered, taking them back to her house to wash them if necessary.

Redner's in Douglassville has posted flyers at the registers, and Clark said several other organizations are collecting coats from employees and will give them to her for distribution.

"I know we've got coats, now I just want to make sure that the people who need them, hear about this and come out," she added.

Once the distribution is completed on Oct. 15, Clark will take any remaining coats to area organizations that have a need.

Clark also plans to distribute coats directly to the homeless in the city of Reading.

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