

Coats for Dufferin: Giving the gift of warmth to those in the community needing it the most



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With colder weather on the way, it's once again the time of year to sort through the closet and decide which coats to keep for the season and which to donate. For coats on the way out the door, a group of local realtors are ready to take them off your hands and give them to residents in need.

Shelburne-based realtors Claire Knight and Dave Crowe have joined forces with Orangeville realtor Jacqueline Clement for a local initiative called Coats for Dufferin.

"Dufferin County is not a warm area to live and there is a massive need, more than we realize, in our community for winter coats," said Knight. "There are so many people out there that have good warm coats that no longer fit or they don't like the style and by donating a coat it's going to keep somebody warm for the whole winter."

Started in 2022 under the name Stay Warm Shelburne, the Coats for Dufferin initiative looks to collect new and gently used coats for adults and children in need in Dufferin County. The coat drive was initially inspired by Shoes4Shelburne, an annual initiative organized by Shelburne Family Chiropractic that looks to provide quality shoes to local residents.

"We heard from Shoes4Shelburne that there was this need for outdoor wear so we decided to collect coats because people need to stay warm over the winter," explained Knight.

Last year, the initiative received 79 donated coats and purchased an additional 22 to bring the total to 101 coats provided to those in need in the community.

"Every single coat went out to the community? they were all taken by the end," said Knight.

With the rise in the cost of living, Knight said they expect the demand for coats this year to be similar to what it was during the 2022 initiative. She noted that the continued warm weather has made collecting coats slow and difficult, as many residents haven't had the

opportunity to look through their closets.

?We want to be ready for when the weather turns so I'm encouraging people to go through their coats now because as the mornings get frosty and cold, we're going to see more of that need,? said Knight.

To help get coats out to individuals in need, Coats for Dufferin has collaborated with Shoes4Shelburne.

Starting Nov. 1 and running until Dec. 15, individuals in need will be able to browse the collection of donated adult coats at an open house event held by the Shoes4Shelburne organizers. The event will be located at 228 Andrew Street every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Coats for Dufferin will also have a spot at the Christmas Hamper pickup on Dec. 16, where the remaining adult and children's coats will be available.

Donations of new and gently used coats can be dropped off at various locations in Shelburne, including the Shelburne Free Press, Shelburne Auto & Cycle, Keller Williams Home Realty Brokerage, Streams Community Hub, Crewson Insurance Brokers, and Turn it Out Dance Studio.

Items can also be dropped off at realtor Jacqueline Clement's office, located at 12 First Ave. in Orangeville.

Coats for Dufferin will be accepting donations until Nov. 15.