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Keeping the community warm: Coats for Dufferin runs to mid-November

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With colder weather on the way, it's once again the time of year to sort through the closet and decide which winter clothes to keep for the season and which to donate.

For items on the way out the door, an annual Dufferin-based initiative is willing and ready to take them off your hands and give them to local residents in need.

Coats for Dufferin, a Dufferin-based initiative run by local realtor Jacqueline Clement is collecting donations of new and gently used coats, snow pants, hats, gloves and boots for their 2024 campaign.

?Its a basic human right, just like having a meal and a roof over your head, that you should be able to walk down the street or for children to go out for recess and not be frozen,? said Clement. ?What struck me was the lack of awareness of how many people in our community need help. It's a huge expense every year, especially with young children because they grow out of them.?

Coats for Dufferin is an amalgamation of two previous initiatives; Stay Warm Shelburne, which was started in 2022 by Shelburne-based realtors Claire Knight and Dave Crowe; and Coats for Kids, started by Clement in 2021. In 2023, the two initiatives joined together to address the need for winter outdoor wear for adults and children.

Since starting the coat collection, Coats for Dufferin has been able to provide nearly every elementary school in Dufferin County with a closet full of winter gear and coats for students to access. The initiative is looking to collect adult sizing to provide the same resource for the high schools.

?Each local school has their own closet of a wide range of sized for them to be able to supply children that come into the school, whether they just forgot a coat that day or they need to keep it,? said Clement.

A significant aspect of Coats for Dufferin is that every coat or winter outerwear item that is donated to the initiative stays directly in the community to benefit residents in need.

?This is a great way to up cycle, keep a bunch of clothing waster out of our landfills and to ensure that it stay in our community,? she said.

Donations of new and gently used coats can be dropped off at 14 different locations throughout Dufferin County.

Shelburne:

? Streams Community Hub

? Turn it Out Dance Studio

? Shelburne Public Library

? Shelburne Auto & Cycle

Orangeville:

? Tan-tations

? Bamboo Babies Kids Boutique

? Art of 8 Martial Arts Academy

? The Hair Lab

? Bin There Dump That

? Century 21 Millennium

Grand Valley:

? Grand Valley Dental

? The Perked Pierogi

Mono:

? Orangeville Storm Soccer Club

? Hockley Hounds

?We do try to make it super easy and convenient. You don't need to wash it or do anything other than put it in a bag and drop it off. If dropping off isn't an option, then please reach out to us and we would be happy to try and coordinate a pickup as well.?

For those who don't have a winter clothing item they can donate but are still interested in helping with the initiative, Coats for Dufferin will also accept gift cards for Walmart and Giant Tiger.

?It is a really great way for us to be able to fill holes in the donations. Sometimes the schools will give us odd requests, like needing socks or mittens instead of outerwear, so this allows us to go out and do our best to fill those gaps,? said Clement.

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

?No donation is too big or too small,? said Clement.