

CLOTHING COLLECTIONS WHILE MAKING CONNECTIONS

The holidays were fading, the temperature was dropping, and **A.R.M.S. Data Assistant Beth Henderson** needed a new coat.

Then, she drove past Safe Harbor.

She became acutely aware of the heat in her car and the coat on her back as she noticed the Safe Harbor residents had neither. "I thought, 'Why can't I do something?'" Beth said. "They're at Safe Harbor – It's a homeless shelter. Maybe I can't change it, but maybe I can make it a little better."

When she asked around at work that morning and learned there were no Safe Harbor clothing collections in place, she decided to change that.

After a few emails to A.R.M.S. and Records Division members, the donations came flooding in.

As members continued to clean out their families' closets, the boxes multiplied, and Beth extended the one-month deadline an extra two weeks to accommodate the continuous influx.

When Safe Harbor **Deputy Sarah Harlan** came to collect the donations expecting a single garbage bag, she was astounded by the eight bags, four boxes, and more.

But what impressed Beth wasn't the amount of clothes, shoes, belts, etc. – it was the overwhelming support from her co-workers.

Since Deputy Harlan wasn't prepared for the number of donations, a handful of members manned the phones while the rest plopped bags on their desk chairs and rolled them down the hallway, through the gym, and out to her cruiser in a special kind of impromptu post-holiday parade.

"We have three shifts, and we don't always cross, but it united us, I think, and you can see it."

Although she is still in the brainstorming phase, the drive's success has encouraged Beth to seek to establish a more permanent collection, potentially tailored to meet Safe Harbor's specific needs and extended agency-wide.

"It's really a simple story," Beth said. "It just makes you feel better when you didn't know you needed to."

