

SIRCH Thrift Warehouse launches Gifts from the Heart program in Bancroft

By Nate Smelle

Since it opened last February the team at the SIRCH Thrift Warehouse in Bancroft has been working to make life better for people living in North Hastings in a variety of ways. On top of the six local full-time jobs they have created, the financial savings and environmental benefits of second hand shopping and the space they have saved in the municipality's landfills, warehouse manager Sherry Hayes says they have found another way to give back to people in need in the community.

"We want to create a fund for local people who need it," says Hayes.

"Whether it's a senior on a really fixed income sleeping on a crappy mattress who needs a mattress, or a woman fleeing an abusive situation needing to start over, or the breadwinner of the family is laid off and they are trying to clothe three children on

Employment Insurance. The idea is that we would have a subsidy pot so that people who need things can come in and get them."

To feed the fund Hayes says they are launching a new initiative called Gifts from the Heart. Just in time for the holiday shopping season the campaign encourages people to contribute to the subsidy pot by making a donation in their loved one's name. Customers are also invited to make a donation in a jar at the cash register. While the reasons why people decide to shop at the Thrift Warehouse seem to differ from person to person, Hayes says they all seem to have one thing in common...their generosity.

"Certainly people earning a low income are able to come in here and get what they need at a price. We also have lots of people who don't need to shop for financial reasons but they are environmentally conscious and wanted to use goods they no longer need. Then there are the thrift shoppers who come in here looking for treasures. No matter what their personal reason is for shopping here, everyone has been very generous."

Recognizing that there are still a lot of people in this community who don't have enough money for their basic necessities, Hayes says it is important for people to give back to the community when they can.

"The idea is for people to give a donation to the Thrift Warehouse as a gift to someone," Hayes says.

"The money raised goes right to our subsidy pot. It doesn't go to help cover administration or anything else; 100 per cent of every donation goes directly to helping people in need in our community. North Hastings has one of the highest poverty rates in Ontario and high levels of unemployment, and we need to work together to change that."

For more information on SIRCH's Gifts from the Heart campaign visit their Facebook page. To make a donation call 1-844-847438.