

the JOY MAKER CHALLENGE



generationOn
A POINTS OF LIGHT ENTERPRISE



Be a Joy Maker!

The holidays are a wonderful time when people celebrate with their family and friends. But for those who don't have the opportunity to be surrounded by loved ones, the joyful holiday season becomes a lonely time of year. By completing acts of joy through meaningful service, you can bring holiday cheer into their lives.

Issue Area: Homelessness and Poverty

Project Name: **Coat Drive**

What You're Doing: Help the less fortunate in your community keep warm over the winter holidays.

Why It Matters: On average, more than 578,000 people are homeless in the United States on a given night, and 31 percent of them are living without shelter. The winter months can be some of the most difficult times of the year, especially for those who don't have the proper winter clothing. Help the people in your community stay cozy this winter with a coat drive!

Ideas to Chat About:

- What would it be like if you didn't have mittens when it was cold?
- What would it feel like if you got a new winter coat for the first time?
- How can you help bring holiday cheer to people who don't have winter clothing?

What You Need:

New or gently used clothing items:

- Coats
- Jackets
- Sweaters
- Boots
- Hats
- Mittens, etc.

Project Instructions for:

- **Grades K-2:** Keep it simple! Follow the instructions.
- **Grades 3-5:** Make it more of a hands on group activity. Invite your whole class to do it!
- **Grades 6-8:** Create more of a challenge by collecting outside a clothing store.
- **Grades 9-12:** Organize a community-wide drive!

How to do it!

1. Contact an agency that can use your winter wear, such as homeless shelters, low-income pediatric clinics, or youth shelters. Some schools or community centers might have a "family clothes closet" or know of an agency that provides clothing free of charge to children.

2. Ask the agency what they will accept. Make sure you know if they will take gently used items or only new items.
3. Search your closets for items to give. Make sure they are all washed and nothing is missing or broken.
4. Think about doing a neighborhood drive to collect items. Tell your neighbors that you're collecting lightly used and new clothing items for low-income and homeless individuals.
5. Deliver your items to the agency.

Reflections:

After your volunteer project, it is important to reflect on the experience. Help youth understand why their contribution was important and how it helped to spread joy to others by asking questions like:

- How does it feel to know that you helped keep someone from being cold?
- How excited do you think these people will be to receive these goods?
- How did this bring them holiday cheer?

Additional Resources and Suggestions:

- Check out our guide for running a donation drive. It's got all kinds of helpful hints!
 - While you're collecting warm clothing, also think about collecting food for your local food bank!
 - Read more about the need for warm winter clothing at <http://www.operationwarm.org>
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