Morning Rotary Brings 'Coats to Kids'

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Even though temperatures are predicted to increase later this week, the past few days in the low teens have definitely announced winter’s arrival to Kodiak. This time of year typically entails thicker-than-usual jackets, but sometimes the proper cold weather attire isn’t within the financial means of some families. That’s why the Kodiak Morning Rotary sponsors “Coats for Kids,” an annual program that recycles used coats and helps keep the island’s youth warm during these especially cold months.

Marita Kaplan is a member of Morning Rotary and helped organize this year’s Coats for Kids, a program she said has been going on since about 1997.

“So this idea started then to have coats donated for people that have children that need coats for the winter. And several agencies in town are participating in different ways. Like the dry cleaners that are at Spenards, or behind Spenards there. They clean all the coats that we bring them for free. And then we go and deliver the coats to the Salvation Army who then stores them and gives them out to people or families that come to the Salvation Army and ask for a coat from the Rotary program.”

Basically, folks in the community are asked to donate lightly used, good condition coats to various drop off locations around town. There are collection boxes at Safeway, Kodiak College, Lindsay’s Gym and on the Coast Guard base.

“As we all know, kids grow out of coats really fast. So if anyone has coats at home from kids that they don’t need anymore, just put it in one of those boxes and Rotary members will collect them from the boxes and then bring them to the dry cleaner and then we pick them up at the dry cleaner and then bring them to the Salvation Army. And that’s important to us that people actually know they can go to the Salvation Army and just say I would like a Rotary coat for my kid or my teenager, so they know they don’t have to pay for it.”

Kaplan said the program is a great way for folks in the community to take part in the season of giving, and fits well with Morning Rotary’s mission around town.

“Rotary, their main mission, of course, is to serve the community, and serve the businesses in the community as well as the individuals that live here, to make it a better place to live so having a warm coat is part of that.”)

Kaplan said that years past have collected up to 500 coats.

Families that need coats for their kids or teens this year can pick them up at the Salvation Army at no cost during December and January.