

Granny helps to make seasons bright for local seniors

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by Sue Austreng

Staff Writer

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A handful of specially-made Christmas cards crafted by Epiphany School eighth-graders accompanied gifts they gathered for their adopted seniors last year. File photo by Sue Austreng

Jennifer Horning has strapped on granny's apron and is busy collecting seniors' Christmas wishes, wrapping sweaters and scarves, slippers and socks, shirts and slacks and so much more.

Of course, Horning can't tackle the Christmas chores alone and so she's enlisted the priceless assistance of dozens of "angels" and "elves," each eager to help grant Christmas wishes this holiday season.

You see, Granny's Christmas Closet is a non-profit organization created 13 years ago, bent on making Christmas a merry holiday for local seniors in need.

"We are a non-profit company who assist seniors in Anoka County who are low income – and some are without much or no family support," Horning said.

She described several Granny's Christmas Closet programs:

1. Christmas Program: Volunteers (also known as "angels" and "elves") help buy items that the seniors need.
2. Box Program: Large empty boxes are distributed to several Anoka County companies. Employees of those companies then collect donations.
3. Sock program: Sock donations are collected from local elementary schools and distributed to seniors in need.

"Every year we even get a used pair in there from a child who gives up their socks. How cute is that," Horning reports.

4. Granny's Christmas Closet warehouse: The warehouse is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is available to social workers throughout the year so that they can come get needed items for seniors.

Horning reports that some 300 "angels" bought gifts for 430 Anoka County seniors this year.

Those gifts were delivered Dec. 4, Horning said.

Although “granny” and her Christmas crew have delivered those gifts, she stressed, “We are always looking for angels and we are always accepting gifts because there are always more seniors that need help,” Horning said.

To learn more about Granny’s Christmas Closet, visit www.grannyschristmascloset.org or e-mail staff@grannyschristmascloset or call 763-792-6408.

Granny’s Christmas Closet Collection Sites

Andover: Andover City Hall

Anoka: Anoka City Hall, Anoka County Government Center, Advent Lutheran Church, Curves, Federal Cartridge, Hoffman Engineering, Rum River Library, Andy’s Service, Mount Olive Lutheran Church

Blaine: Blaine City Hall, Johnsville Branch Library, Northtown Central Library

Centerville: Centerville City Hall

Circle Pines: City of Circle Pines, Centennial Branch Library

Columbia Heights: Columbia Heights Public Library, St. Tim’s Lutheran Church

Coon Rapids: Coon Rapids City Center, Anoka-Hennepin Credit Union, Coldwell Banker-Burnet, Crooked Lake Library, Curves, Von Hanson’s Meats

East Bethel: East Bethel Senior Center

Fridley: City of Fridley, Mississippi Branch Library, Bob’s Produce

Ham Lake: City of Ham Lake, North Central Branch Library

Hilltop: City of Hilltop

Lexington: City of Lexington

Lino Lakes: City of Lino Lakes

Nowthen: Nowthen City Hall

Oak Grove: Oak Grove City Hall

St. Francis: City of St. Francis, Anytime Fitness, St. Francis Branch Library

Zimmerman: Anytime Fitness

For more about Granny's Christmas Closet, call 763-792-6408, e-mail staff@grannyschristmascloset.org, or visit www.grannyschristmascloset.org.

Granny's Christmas Closet headquarters address is at P.O. Box 444, Anoka, MN 55303.

Sue Austreng is at sue.austreng@ecm-inc.com