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# Clothing drive helps homeless

By SUZY PARKER  
 STAFF WRITER

People don't think of the homeless in the summer, says Sheri Levinson-Stav.

"If they think about them at all, it's in the winter, but these people really need clothes all year long," she says.

That's why Levinson-Stav is helping her mother, Lois Levinson, who owns Guys and Gals clothing store, organize a clothing drive at the West Bloomfield store this Friday.

Anyone who brings a pair of used jeans (with no holes) to the Orchard Mall store between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. on Friday, June 19 will receive half off the price of a new pair of

jeans. As part of the store's third annual "Help Zip Up the Homeless" clothing drive, all the old jeans collected will be donated to Oakland County homeless shelters.

"The object isn't just to get the one pair of jeans, though," says Lois Levinson. "We want to keep the clothes in circulation and let someone else who needs help make use of them."

Along with old jeans, Levinson is encouraging people to bring in as many bags of old clothes as they want. Levinson has chosen two Pontiac shelters, The Baldwin Center and New Bethel Baptist Church Outreach Ministry, to receive Friday's donations.

Representatives of the agencies

also will be on hand all day to give out tax-deductible receipts for bags of clothing and to arrange pick up of other, larger items people might want to donate.

This clothing drive is literally a lifesaver for New Bethel, says Verice Blackshire, director of the shelter, which just opened its doors June 15 to homeless mothers, victims of domestic violence and their children.

"It's going to help us a lot," Blackshire says. "We need clothes for our families and we don't have any."

Over the years, community service has been a big part of her family's life, Levinson says, but a thriving business made time for volun-

teering scarce. Three years ago Levinson decided to combine those two parts of her life and began holding a clothing drive at her store.

The first year went well, Levinson says, but she was amazed last year when people from as far as Holland and Grand Rapids arrived with donations. By the end of the day, the store had collected more than 400 pairs of jeans, hundreds of bags of clothing, and even some large appliances, according to Levinson.

The challenge this year, she says, is to collect even more.

"Hopefully people will get into it and clean out their closets," Levinson says. "There are a lot of people who need their help."

## YMCA HIGHLIGHTS

These YMCA highlights appear courtesy of the Farmington YMCA, 28100 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills. For more information, call 553-4020.

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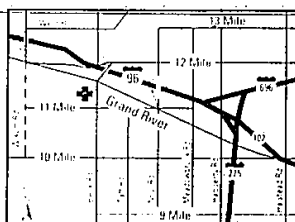


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