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Addus collecting coats for seniors

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MT. VERNON — While numerous entities collect coats for children in anticipation of colder weather, opportunities for senior citizens are sometimes rare.

Through their work with senior citizens and clients, Addus Health Care noticed that fact, and will be offering free coats to seniors in need later this month.

Addus Assistant Director Janice Prosize said the idea for the drive came from the business' marketing director and last year, the first year of the project, just about 100 coats were collected and given away.

"We hope to at least reach that mark this year or surpass that," Prosize said. "People were very generous last year in donating their coats."

Coats in good condition — no rips or buttons missing — will be accepted at Addus, 101 N. Third Street, through 5:30 p.m. Friday. The business is open from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mt. Vernon Fast Service Dry Cleaners and Off Broadway Cleaners agreed to dry-clean the coats for free for Addus, and the coats will be available to the public at Addus beginning Oct. 22 until they are gone.

"We just think that the businesses dry-cleaning them for free for us is just wonderful," Prosize said. "We are tickled that they would do that for us. That speaks very highly of the businesses."

Gabe Harrison, manager of Fast Service Dry Cleaners, said the business agreed because it "seemed like the right thing to do."

"This is a good project and it was something we wanted to do," Harrison said.

A call to Off Broadway Cleaners was not returned.

The drive is not limited to winter coats, Prosize said, windbreakers and lighter coats, along with rain coats, will also be accepted.

Larger-sized coats, size 20 and above, are especially needed, Prosize said, and you do not have to be a client of Addus to pick out a coat.

"People in need may come to the center and simply pick the coat out of their choice," she said. "We had a couple of coats left over last year and we then donated them to Angels on Assignment. The only thing we asked is that they be given away, as we received them for free."

She said that sadly, many older residents are in need of coats.

"It is evident through the work we do that some seniors do not have warm winter coats," Prosize said. "We are trying to fill that void."

Marketing Director Donna Cunetto said she's glad that Addus is able to help so many seniors through the project.

"There are always a lot of coat drives for children, but you don't see a lot for adults," she said. "Sometimes senior citizens have to choose whether they buy their medicines or warm clothing. We hope we're making it possible they don't have to make that decision."