

Clothing drive to help community, promote literacy

BY JENNIFER BISHOP

the northern light

The Anglophone North School District is launching an initiative to promote literacy and help a local organization.

The Spring Cleaning with Meaning Clothing Drive initiative is a project that will help in two ways. It will see people in the community donate their used and unwanted clothing, which will be given to the New Brunswick Association for Community Living at cost. The money will then be used in communities in the district to buy books and promote literacy.

The community living association will purchase the donations from the school by bag, and the organizers are hoping to raise \$5,000 worth of clothing.

“What a lot of people do is they hold onto their clothes ... put it in the basement, and all of a sudden they have to throw it out because it gets all stinky,” said Dianne Cormier Northrup, vice-president of the board of directors for the NBACL.

Cormier Northrup said the association collects clothing to sell at stores which is how the group funds the programs it offers like the Transition to Work, Family Support and Social Inclusion programs.

The NBACL helps to support adults and children who have intellectual disabilities along with their families.

Cormier Northrup said the association has a large operation that employs many people who collect and sell the used clothing in the southern part of the province. The association doesn't have enough resources to collect clothes in the north.

“What they're saying is we don't actually have the resources up here, but if you gather a bunch of clothes, we would actually buy them off of you,” she said.

The money raised from the collection and sale of the clothing then goes back into the programs the NBACL.

They have offices in different parts of the province including Bathurst, Fredericton, Grand Falls, Edmundston, Bathurst and Saint John. “We have an office right here with three staff that provide services,” said Cormier Northrup. “The office here needs money for it to stay alive.”

Audrey Ronalds, community engagement co-ordinator with the district, said a similar initiative has been done in the Miramichi.

The items accepted for the clothing drive include clothing, coats, linens, blankets, shoes, boots and curtains. Even if the items are stained or can't be used anymore but are washed and clean, they can be cut up and sold as rags by the NBACL so they're still useful.

Ronalds said people can bring in bags or items of cloths and the items will not be sorted.

“We don't go through the bags,” she said. “If they're a little big – there's some that come in really big – we just disperse them so we can get two out of one.”

The group will begin accepting clothing donations starting April 1st and the final day for donations will be April 26 when people will be able to drop off donations from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Clothing donations can be dropped off at the Bathurst High School entrance on Munro Street.

“It's an easy way for the community to actually make a difference without taking any money out of their pocket,” said Cormier Northrup.

Ronalds said the initiative is about more than just helping the NBACL and raising money for literacy.

“It's about the awareness and the camaraderie of the community coming together to help others,” she said.

Anyone from the community interested in volunteering on April 26 can contact Ronalds at 549-5995 or Cindy Courier at 547-2806. Anyone from the community who has items they're wishing to donate but has no way to transport it to the school can also contact Courier or Ronalds.