



After five years and 700 coats, Unity Church seek men's jackets too

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Mary Lopez wanted the Unity Church coat drive to be different from other drives, Rev. Robert Norton said.

While most Napa coat drives take place in December, Lopez wanted Unity Church to ask for coats in January when people clean out their closets for the new year. Instead of collecting women's and children's coats,

they would gather men's.

After amassing more than 700 items of outerwear in five years, Mary Lopez died of lung disease Monday night just as the coat drive she brainstormed had kicked off in eight locations.

Instead of canceling the drive, the church has dedicated this year's drive to Lopez, Rev. Norton said.

"Homeless men have been

See COATS, Page A3

The Unity Church in Napa Valley coat drive bin overflows with coats Tuesday at Rabobank. Bins are available for men's coat donations at seven Napa banks during business hours until mid-January. *Submitted photo*

Coats

From Page A1

made warmer because her heart was so big," he said.

The unconventionality of their drive has paid off, said Charlene Horton, program director at Community Action of Napa Valley.

Homeless shelters receive most of their coats during the holidays, and donations slow to a trickle in January when temperatures are often chilliest, Horton said.

"The beauty of the Unity Church coat drive is that it comes at a time when we really need them," Horton said.

Unity also asks for men's coats, while most drives attract women's and children's coats, Horton said. Two-thirds of homeless in Napa Valley shelters are men, she said.

Seven local banks have agreed to place a bin in their lobbies for coat collections this year, including Rabobank, 700 Trancas St.; Travis Credit Union, 3236 Claremont Way, and Wells Fargo, 3255 Jefferson St.

Four locations of Umpqua Bank will also receive coats: 3626 Bel Aire Plaza, 1500 Soscol Ave., 3271 Browns Valley Road and 301 Soscol Ave.

All are open for donation drop-offs during business hours until Jan. 15.

Bank workers said they didn't hesitate to host the coat drive bins.

Unity Church coat drive

Unity Church located at 3275 Hagen Rd. is seeking donations of coats, hats, backpacks, rain ponchos, umbrellas, razors, toothbrushes, combs, new underwear and toiletries. Donations can be made at the church on Jan. 9 and 16, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Coats may also be dropped off during business hours until Jan. 15 at the following locations:

- Rabobank, 700 Trancas St.
- Travis Credit Union, 3236 Claremont Way,
- Wells Fargo, 3255 Jefferson St.
- The four Napa Umpqua Bank branches located at 3626 Bel Aire Plaza, 1500 Soscol Ave., 3271 Browns Valley Road and 301 Soscol Ave.

Dominique Rudd, vice president and store manager of Umpqua Bank, has asked her son to donate a few old coats from his closet, she said.

"I look at my own kids and think, 'I'm fortunate enough to buy them coats,'" Rudd said, "and I want everyone to have a coat because it's pretty cold out there right now."

In addition to men's coats, the drive asks for warm hats, backpacks, rain ponchos, umbrellas, razors, toothbrushes, combs, new underwear and toiletries.

"People will part with things after they get new things for Christmas," Rev. Norton said.