

When our clothing team was able to obtain more than 7,000 coats to donate to local nonprofits this winter and spring, our stores jumped into action to serve their communities.

Fort Wayne, Ind. Store Director Scott Hoffman partnered with the local YWCA to donate 3,600 coats to serve local women in need. The YWCA took things a step further and started reaching out to other local agencies that could use them and set up a process for other local charities to benefit from the donation.

Shortly after, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan reached out to us hoping to purchase discounted coats for youth who're unhoused or in foster care in Detroit. The timing was perfect and provided an opportunity to donate 768 coats to Detroit Public Schools just in time for the coldest part of winter.

Our Angola, Ind. store has partnered with the Angola Coat Bank for years to supply coats for their patrons, but this year was unlike any other. This year her store supplied the Angola Coat Bank with more than 980 parkas.

"When I saw the notification that we had coats to give away, I said, 'Oh we have to get some of those!,'" said Jackie Gerardot, Store Director of the Angola Meijer.

The coat bank was thrilled. Having so many women's coats in such a wide variety of sizes frees up funding for them to buy even more men's and children's coats.

"It was something they weren't expecting, given the end of the winter season, and they were almost in tears," she said. "We have another round of coats coming in on Monday for them."

Jackie is pleased to have been able to make the connection.

"I'm a newer store director and getting to do things like this is one of my favorite things about my job," she said. "Getting to help people and see their faces—not only when they get the donated items, but then again when they come back in to do their regular shopping and are able to tell us about all the people they helped—is really gratifying."

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Additional assets available online: [\(1\)](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/How-Our-Stores-Donated-7-000-Coats-to-Women-in-Need>