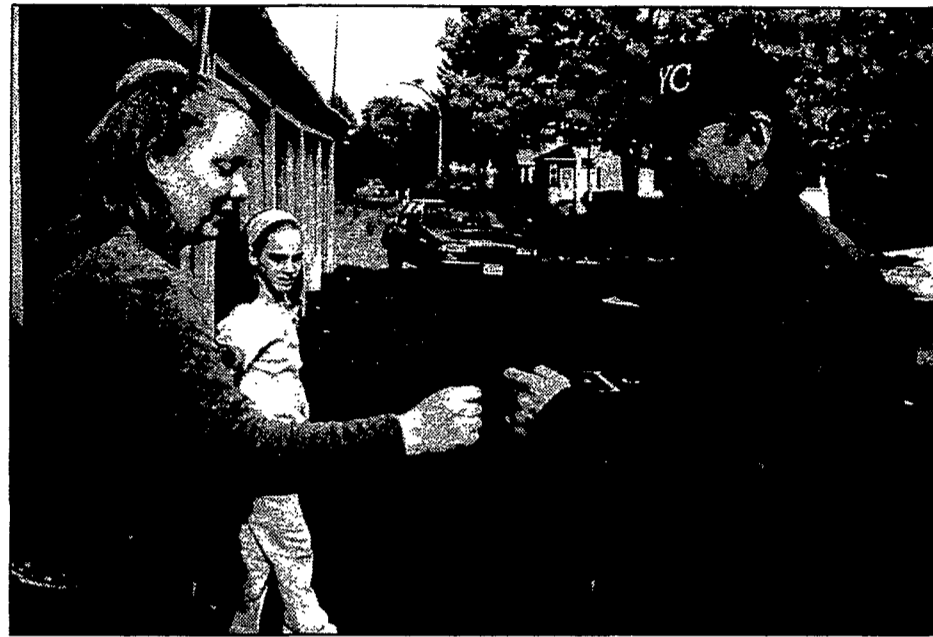


on the **MOVE**

# Clothing people with kindness



Meghan Riordan accepts a leather jacket from Dominick Zarcone for the clothing drive she organized at St. Andrew's Church in Rochester Oct. 21.



Meghan Riordan carries clothing out to the garages at the church.

**L**ike many a teenage girl, Meghan Riordan pays significant attention to clothing — but not just on trips to shopping malls for the latest fashions.

She said she notices, while taking the Regional Transit Service bus across the city of Rochester on school days, that poverty is evident in bus-riders' attire — or, very often, their lack of attire.

"You see a lot of kids wearing just sandals, or shoes without socks, or no winter coat in the middle of winter," Meghan said. "You feel bad and you want to do something."

Meghan, 17, a senior at Aquinas Institute, did do something. Last fall at St. Andrew's Church, she organized a clothing drive that went over so well, it's returning for a second year. The drive will take place Saturday, Nov. 3, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the St. Andrew's School hall, 901 Portland Ave., Rochester.

"People were asking, 'Are you going to do it again? I have clothes I can give you,'" Meghan said.

Meghan collected clothing from parishioners after Masses at St. Andrew's Oct. 20-21 and Oct. 27-28. Many donations, she noted, also came from neighboring St. Philip Neri Church. The drive's emphasis is on winter clothing — coats, hats, mittens, gloves, sweaters, socks and pants.

The clothing will be made available at no cost to Catholic and non-Catholic residents in the area surrounding St. Andrew's. "All are welcome," Meghan said. Goods that do not get taken will be forwarded to local charities. Some leftovers from last year's drive, Meghan said, actually ended up being sent to Ecuador.

Meghan devised the first clothing drive as a project for her Girl Scout Silver Award. Working closely with her mother, Karen, who serves as St. Andrew's religious-education coordinator, Meghan amassed enough donations to stack 12 tables high with clothes and to fill a fleet of racks with more than 300 coats.

"I didn't think everything would go that quick, but people were just lined up outside," she recalled.

Meghan, noting that a growing number of fellow youth-group members and adult parishioners are getting involved as volunteers, said she's confident the drive will continue as an annual event after she begins college next fall.

The drive is one of many parish

activities for Meghan. She is also a eucharistic minister, greeter and occasional altar server; a religious-education teacher; and a volunteer with the St. Andrew's Food Cupboard. She even logs time as weekend rectory receptionist.

"I guess I just love my church," she explained simply.

She doesn't stop there: Meghan is also a ballet instructor for the city's Department of Recreation, and serves as a tutor for students at School 7. These duties fit well into her future plans to become a teacher.

For all her service efforts, Meghan has received the diocesan Hands of Christ award, given to high-school seniors who have made outstanding contributions in their church, school and community.

Meghan was among 656 Hands of Christ recipients this year. Bishop Matthew H. Clark presented her with a plaque during a recognition service Oct. 24 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Greece; the bishop also presided at services Oct. 27 at Corning's St. Mary Church and Oct. 27 at Irondequoit's St. Margaret Mary Church. The ceremonies were held in conjunction with World Youth Sunday Oct. 28.

Meghan was welcomed into the Catholic Church in 1997 through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, adapted for children. She credits much of her early involvement to the energetic Sister Lucille Nalbano, of the Religious Teachers Filippini, the parish's former religious-education coordinator.

Meghan, who lives only a couple of blocks from St. Andrew's, said she enjoys any opportunity to combine her faith with neighborhood outreach. Though she acknowledged that parts of northeast Rochester suffer from poverty and crime, she stated, "The neighborhood is getting better and we want to keep getting better. I try to see the good side."

Her parish, through such efforts as the clothing drive, plays a key role in fostering that good side. "St. Andrew's brightens the community as you're coming down Portland (Avenue)," Meghan said.

With her faith serving as her inspiration, Meghan shines her own bright light around St. Andrew's.

"God calls us to certain places, and that's just something he wanted me to do," she remarked.

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