

When you're poor you have to be creative.

Each year a group of individuals gather and host a Good Neighbors picnic for the homeless in greater Columbus area. As part of the picnic, a Free Store is made available to the homeless where they can select coats and other clothing that help them prepare for the winter.

Each year the group is challenged with their effort of collecting coats for infants to adults. At a recent meeting of the core volunteers who produce the picnic, they got a great idea of how to expand their coat collection efforts.

They suggested that everyone combine their coat collecting efforts with local summer garage sales in their neighborhoods.

One of our volunteers sent out an email to his neighbors prior to their annual garage sale and requested coats. The day of the garage sale, 70 homes participated. He and another neighbor collected twelve large bags of every type of coat and "hoodies" available for subsequent distribution at the October 28th picnic.

Neighbors were in the "Clean House" frame of mind and the volunteers were happy to collect the coats. Donors were given a small sheet that thanked them for their donation and listed the Good Neighbors Picnic web address for more information. Later a general Thank You was sent out to the whole neighborhood and listed the success of the day.

Being creative will keep many warm this winter.