

## Marblehead latch on to A Bed for Every Child

Businesses, individuals further goal of helping needy kids

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**Marblehead Reporter**

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**What's this?**

Marblehead —

A statewide, North Shore-based nonprofit has garnered support from many local businesses and organizations in Marblehead to help achieve its goal of providing a bed for every child this season.

“We know a bed isn’t going to get everyone to graduation, but we do know that a good night’s sleep is going to get a kid ready to go to school the next day,” said Robyn Frost, Mass. Coalition for the Homeless’ executive director. “If we’re really going to break the cycle of poverty, then we need to really take a look at the child.”

A Bed for Every Child, the Coalition’s signature initiative, was launched in September 2011 to distribute 1,500 beds to low-income children throughout the state.

“It became something we noticed through our work with public schools and community health centers that we do prevention work with, and that there was a fair number of children whose parents weren’t able to purchase a bed for them,” said Frost.

To send a mattress, box spring and linens to one child, Frost said, costs about \$250, even when they purchase the beds at wholesale price.

“So to disseminate 1,500 beds, it costs about \$300,000, but we would like to get there faster.”

In June, according to the initiative’s annual report, A Bed for Every Child has received \$10,000 through donations, grants and drives, enabling it to distribute 1,500 beds.

“We have had an enormous amount of success from both local and national donations to help purchase these beds, as well as a lot of help from local businesses and drives,” said Frost.

One of those partners in the initiative is the Orange Leaf of Marblehead, located at 12 Atlantic Ave., which is having a fundraiser on Dec. 18. The store’s daily sales will be donated to the cause, so Marblehead residents can purchase a bed for every child.

“Orange Leaf Corporation nationwide is doing a pajama drive and the franchise owner can pick a local charity they would like to support,” said Marblehead Orange Leaf owner Michael Hennessey, who is also participating, too. “So we partnered with Mass. Coalition for the Homeless.”

Hennessey added, “We thought it would be a great partnership to get these pajamas with the bed.”

Hennessey said 40 sets of pajamas have already been donated, and the store will be accepting more.

“Anyone who [donates] a pair of pajamas gets three ounces off their yogurt purchase, and if you brought in three pajamas, you get nine ounces off,” Hennessey said.

Alycia Dell’Orfano, who is a new Marblehead resident and a Salem State University student, is the development coordinator and has brought A Bed for Every Child’s visibility to the community through her work at She, Hip Baby Gear, National Grand Bank and Marblehead Bank. Deahn Ivers, a member of the temple’s social action program, said the temple’s members have chosen to partner with the initiative.

“We’ve got an ongoing interest in ending homelessness, and we feel it’s a social issue that needs to be addressed on governmental and individual levels,” said Leblang.

And the Coalition, she believes, has that right balance between governmental and individual efforts.

“They’re an organization that knows what they’re doing,” said Leblang, “and the people at the Homeless has decades of experience on the issue of homelessness.”

Since Nov. 18, the temple has been collecting newly bought twin and full-size bedding, which includes sheets, pillows, pillowcases and blankets, and will continue to do so until Dec. 21.

As of this past Monday, according to Leblang, 62 linen items had been donated.

“We know that people get tired, and they get asked for things a lot, and we worried that people wouldn’t be responsive, but we figured, what the heck?” said Leblang. “I was really overwhelmed by the response we got.”

Volunteering last weekend at the Coalition’s headquarters in Lynn, members of the temple sorted through items donated for the initiative, and Leblang said she was amazed at the turnout, especially because a certain sporting event was going on.

“We had 30 people show up even when the Patriots played [AFC East rival Miami in a game in which the team clinched the division title], and there were guys volunteering,” said Leblang. “I know people TiVo-ed the game and all, but I thought it was awesome.”

For residents who want to either donate or find out how to get involved in the Coalition’s A Bed for Child initiative, contact Dell’Orfano at 781-595-7570, Ext. 23 or at [alycia@mahomeless.org](mailto:alycia@mahomeless.org).

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