



Helping People Help Themselves: Why Missie's Closet Needs You!

by Claudia Robinson

In a crisis, women rally with unconditional concern, support and whatever supplies they can get their hands on. We've been doing it for centuries. In the wake of the recession, the resilient spirit of sisterhood is once again being called upon to help our neighbors and friends in need.

In 2009, I was employed as Administrative Assistant by Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and the Islands (CACCI) with funds taken from the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



Missie Carney-Getzie & CACCI Client Advocate Jen Pike at the Sunday Funday

While my duties varied, my Director, Missie Carney-Getzie, made it clear that Missie's Closet, the agency's on-site emergency food and essentials pantry, was to be my priority.

Established in 2007, in an effort to provide one stop care for clients in need, Missie's Closet quickly became an essential part of what CACCI is about, servicing over 30 clients or more a month. Over time, however, Missie became overburdened as the need for services grew. The Closet began to languish.

Missie's Closet immediately became my pet project. What had initially been a one room operation quickly became two. I created fliers and business cards exclusive to the Closet and networked with other non-profit agencies. Maggie Tyson, the Manager of CapeAbilities' Thrift Store 'adopted' the Closet, donating items they couldn't sell as well as sending new donors our way.

My co-worker and 'partner in crime' Richard and I suddenly found ourselves renting UHauls to pick up donations; our shelves in the Closet, as well as our furniture storage unit were full. All examples of overwhelming generosity as well as proof positive that passion and dedication can move mountains.



Shelves are stacked high with generous donations but volunteers are needed to keep the closet organized and restocked.

Donors eager to help a worthy cause organized food drives for our pantry. We had to buy an extra freezer for the all the food. Missie's Closet was finally on the map!

I handed out more cards, shook hands, gave tours and shared statistics, exposed the chronic nature of homelessness and hunger that existed right here in our own backyard. Everyone suddenly wanted to know how to help.

We grew a little more every day. It was truly, like giving birth to a baby, and being able to watch it grow in leaps and bounds as we nurtured it was well worth the growing pains. We were now helping over 190 clients a month. I wore a lot of hats, but Closet Keeper was the one I wore most often. It was the one that fit the best.

As the anniversary of my hire date drew near and the expiration of the funds that had provided my position dwindled, I realized my job was in jeopardy. With an impending layoff looming, I made the difficult decision to leave early, spend the summer with my children and begin a search for more financially stable territory.

On my last day at CACCI , I was presented with a 'Lifetime Volunteer Pass' to Missie's Closet, a gift I've used, and intend to use often, and for as long as I am needed. I've invested too much of my heart and soul to walk away now.

Maybe one day there will be a place for me there again, but for now this is a satisfactory compromise for all involved



Lending a hand at Missie's Closet

Adorned with primary colored handprints in all shapes and sizes, the décor of the Closet is simple but powerful - a visual testament of sorts to all the people who helped create and maintain it, accentuated, here and there by newer prints, placed with gratitude, by those that have had a need filled within its walls.

The call for volunteers has never been more urgent. With stimulus-funded employment in decline, CAC is looking to its community to fill the gaps. Without your help, the Closet's future is, at best, uncertain. This is your chance to leave a print, literally and figuratively, on your community. Will you hear the call to action and extend YOUR hand?



The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm - Swedish Proverb

"If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."

Missie's Closet

Emergency Food/Essential Pantry

115 Enterprise Rd
Hyannis
508-771-1727

Community Action Committee Cape Cod & Islands

www.cacci.cc



Sign makers volunteer at the 2010 Sunday Funday Summer Fundraiser

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED:

Monday-Friday
Between the hours of:
9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If you can help with Missie's Closet
please contact Mellisa Carney-Getzie

508 771-1727 ext. 146

Email: miss@cacci.cc
Or visit CACCI in person at:
115 Enterprise Road., Hyannis

Missie's Closet is just one of the CACCI
Client Self-Sufficiency Services. For
more information on these services visit
www.cacci.cc/hap.html

*Attention Students
this is a PERFECT C.A.S.
or C.S.P. opportunity!
Call Mellisa for more information!

Friend us on Facebook at:
<http://facebook.com/missies.closet>

Visit our website at: <http://cacci.cc>

Donate at: <http://cacci.cc/donate.html>

Claudia Robinson lives on Cape Cod with her
husband and two children.

She entertains her passion for reading in between
being a full-time Mom, aspiring writer and avid
photographer. You can view some of her work at:
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Claudia is also a book reviewer for
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