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The Kinship Closet helps those in need

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LANCASTER - Among the programs offered by Fairfield County Job & Family Services, The Kinship Closet is helping those in need get back on their feet.

The Kinship Closet is a program that provides donated items to families and individuals struggling from life's setbacks, whether it be a housefire, unemployment or other problems.

"We opened the doors to The Kinship Closet over four years ago," said Jenny Ruff, program coordinator. "We started the program because we saw so many people in need. At first, we asked the staff for help and then later I passed out flyers everywhere I saw yard sales."

Success of The Kinship Closet couldn't have happened without the support of the community, Ruff said. There are no eligibility requirements for participation in this program.

The Kinship Closet provides donated items to families and individuals in need of household and personal items.

"Many people who come to The Kinship Closet come with a variety of needs," Ruff said. "Some of their basic needs can be anything from furniture to appliances, dishes to towels and bed linens to clothing. Around the beginning of school, we're always asked for school clothes and supplies."

Ruff said The Kinship Closet is open to people who have referrals from different agencies in Fairfield County. Some of those referrals come from the Community Action Program, Lutheran Social Services, Lighthouse, Fairfield County Job & Family Services, MRDD and Information and Referrals.

The Kinship Closet is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

The availability of items is not guaranteed because the program is based on donations. Customers are encouraged to contact The Kinship Closet and have their names placed on a waiting list for any needed items not currently available.

Ruff said donations are always accepted. The Kinship Closet will arrange to pick up the donated items and all the donations are tax deductible. Donation forms are available upon request.

"It's been a humbling experience for me," Ruff said. "It shows how helpless people are and what we take for granted."
