

Coats for Kids in Lake Zurich provide children with hundreds of winter coats



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At The Chapel in Lake Zurich on Saturday, 172 area families received 500 new coats for the coming winter during the annual "Lake Zurich Coats for Kids" giveaway, organizers said.

Volunteers, residents and area businesses helped put together the coat drive alongside Operation Warm, a national nonprofit that provides new winter coats for children in need.

"A new winter coat is more than a coat," said Rich Lalley, Operation Warm executive director who lives in Lincolnshire. "It boosts the child's self esteem and empowers them to go to school with pride on cold days."

Hawthorn Woods resident Denise Rasbid launched the Lake Zurich event in spring 2013 after hearing about Operation Warm on the radio. For this winter season, the local event raised \$25,000 to obtain 1,400 coats,

Rasbid said.

"Over the years, we've seen how great the need is," she said.

The coats that were not distributed over the weekend will be donated to local shelters, schools and other organizations that assist people in need, Rasbid said. During the event, children also received hats and gloves.

Children also were allowed to shop around and pick out their favorite colors.

Wheeling resident Brissa Ramos, 8, wrote her name on an inside tag to her new pink-colored coat.

"I like it," Brissa said.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelance photographer and reporter for Pioneer Press.

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