New season, new clothes, new look!

Whoosh — one day it’s snowing and the next day it’s spring. Well, at least that’s how it goes at our Second Chance Shop. Mother Nature, please take note.

We had all those bag sales late this winter to clear the way for a new season of clothing, and thanks to the work of a lot of volunteers who gave up their weekend, we now have a new display of bright spring clothing.

Special thanks go to Janet Stitt, Cheryl Glidden, Pat Sibbitts, Phyllis Lawrence and Sharon White (shown in the first photo) for their help. Also thank you to Marge James, Cathy Devins, Nick Scelzi, and Jim White for their help in transforming the shop.

We added an area for suits and nicer clothes for job interviews and special occasions, we have some cute kids’ stuff, pretty dresses and more. As always, we offer good quality at low prices.

If you haven’t yet visited our shop, now’s a great time to stock up on new things. We’re on the corner of Main Street and Riverside in downtown Canton. We share the building with St. Mary’s Church Thrift Shop but we’re the one with the white cat statues in the front window. (Sorry but the statues are NOT for sale.)

We’re happy to accept clean clothing in good condition. We provide free clothes to those in need and income from what we sell helps us pay the rent for both the pantry and shop.

If you’re interested in volunteering in the shop or would like to fill in for other shop volunteers, we’d be glad to have you. Please stop in and talk with Director Connie Jenkins.
Days like these

I always love a beginning and we have plenty of them this season. Days like these at Church & Community Program are made up of a rush of new ventures, planning and rethinking. We accomplished a big job last week in the Second Chance Shop and continue to get new clothes onto the racks. Our snowbird volunteers will find a great surprise when they come back.

As always, we juggle staff, space and food in the pantry, steadily welcoming new families. We’re fortunate to reap a harvest of generosity from the community, our churches, local groups and businesses. Each day has its own routine and flavor. We start the week early on Monday when a hardy band of volunteers brings us donated food from Walmart, then we dig in to sort and stock it, some to store, some to use, and excess to share with other food providers.

Twice a month now, we’re delivering to the high rises on Riverside, so 25 people who otherwise could not get here are receiving a variety of wholesome good food. This program stems from a summer program that was possible thanks to grants from Catholic Charities and Walmart. It blossomed into this delivery program, thanks to a wonderful group of volunteers who we call our Senior Squad. As it happens, most of them have gray hair, but the name refers to the recipients of the deliveries. We have eight volunteers, which is exactly the number we need, so more are welcome. Come see me! We also could use some more volunteers in the pantry and for unloading deliveries.

The rest of the week, we pick up donated food from Price Chopper and we receive regular boosts from the churches and individuals. The Knights of Columbus is working with our friends at St. Mary’s Church to bring us hundreds of canned goods throughout Lent. We can’t say thank you enough. The Canton Masons also are regular visitors and they always bring food. SUNY Canton donated a 6-foot-tall rack of bread last week and some fraternity brothers from Alpha Omega Chi at SUNY Canton have been helping us unload pallets of food we buy from the Food Bank of Central New York. Other students from St. Lawrence University are regulars here, volunteering through Rotaract or interning with Community-Based Learning classes.

These are all peeks at our regular days. We’re also working on new projects, including some boosts in technology. We have a new phone – haha – but also are beginning to use Constant Contact to stay in touch by email. Best yet, our board Vice President Fran Bailey is working on a new website for us!

Days like these, we have a lot to be proud of, and a lot to be grateful for. Thank you to all who help make it so.
So long, good neighbor

We join our neighbors next door at St. Mary’s Church Thrift Shop in saying farewell to longtime shop manager Carolyn Shelmidine, who’s embarking upon a new adventure, moving in with her twin sister in Adams. We suspect they will have a lot of fun.

It’s the laughter that defines the spirit of St. Mary’s Church Thrift Shop. Amid the mountains of clothes, the flurry of sorting, and all the daily hubbub, there’s always laughter — and it tracks back to manager Carolyn Shelmidine. She’s a pure spark of positive energy, and she’ll be missed.

Shelmidine, 84, is leaving the helm of the former St. Vincent de Paul shop as well as the area. She started with the shop in 2002 and has gone through its several relocations and expansions. At one point, she operated the shop from her garage as the church was selling off property.

"After 52 years in Canton, I'll be sharing a new home with my sister, Marilyn LaLone, in Adams," she says. "We’re both excited."

A former school nurse who also taught early childhood education at SUNY Canton (then named Canton College), she’s retiring on April 30. She is looking forward to visiting her children and to becoming reacquainted with Adams, where she graduated from high school.

As neighbors sharing the building at 7 Main St., we’ll miss Carolyn very much. Best wishes to her.

We got a match

Church & Community Program has been awarded a $1,500 Stewart’s Holiday Match. Thank you to Stewart’s Shops and to all the customers who donate their spare change to this worthy program. Stewart’s has collected and matched donations since 1986, boosting local programs in all its communities. According to a news release, Stewart’s received requests for $4 million in funding from more than 1,800 organizations. It had $2.6 million available to donate, so we’re doubly honored to be selected.

C&CP uses our Holiday Match to support two special programs geared for children. School Supply Program provides essential required school supplies and a nice new backpack. Students also can get free haircuts, new toothbrushes and other dental items. This past fall, we added colorful new socks too, so the kids can put their best foot forward.

The other program that shares this funding, Giving Tree, provides holiday gifts, toys, games, hand-knitted hats and mittens, pajamas and more for 430 local children and their families. The families also receive a grocery coupon from Save-A-Lot to assure a holiday feast.

Help for Senior Pantry Delivery

St. Lawrence Health Alliance provided grant funding that allowed us to purchase a new freezer in support of our pantry delivery program to residents of the high rise apartments on Riverside. Thank you!

About the grant: The project described was supported by Funding Opportunity Number CMS 1G1CMS331402 from the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The contents provided are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS or any of its agencies.

Sharing info, ideas, inspiration

The next meeting of the Food Access Providers Alliance will be at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 23 at the United Methodist Church, 41 Court St. in Canton.
Days like these...

THANK YOU for so many reasons! Whether it’s a singing Valentine from The Goldenaires or a milk donation from Canton Kunoco, we get some nice surprises. Above left, SLU student Jordan Bernier helps fill a bag (donated from Kinney’s) for the Senior Delivery Program. These gentlemen — Camron Spivey-Smith, Christian O’Hora and Jbany Calderon — all from the fraternity Alpha Omega Chi at SUNY Canton help us unload food trucks. Our Senior Squad volunteers include, from left, Thadine Wight, Sue Holz, Jodee Cotey, JoAnn DenBleyker, Marsha Akins, Kathy Locke, Neal and Barbara Burdick, and Jim Akins. In the middle, Marge James and Sharon White recently spent a Saturday tagging clothes during our changeover from winter to spring. Our Second Chance Shop, corner of Main Street and Riverside, is open from 9:30-4 Monday through Friday. Our friends at Lights on the River are having a tasty breakfast to help raise money for pantries in the St. Lawrence County.

LIGHTS ON THE RIVER BREAKFAST

Come for breakfast to help Lights on the River, a local non-profit organization, raise money for 16 local food pantries, including ...

Church & Community Program in Canton!

Saturday, March 30: 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Price: $7.50 adult, $7 Senior, $5 under 12, free for children under 5
Menu: scrambled eggs, bacon or sausage, home fries, pancakes, toast, coffee, tea, orange juice, and milk
Location: St. John’s Episcopal Church 500 Caroline St. Ogdensburg, N.Y.

See you for breakfast!