

## A warm embrace for those in need

By Alvaro Macias

As the winter settles in it's hard to ignore that winter chill as it crawls up your spine. You can bundle up in layers of clothing and keep that unforgiving cold from reaching our core. Maybe a hot cup of cocoa, a cozy blanket and a spot right in front of your fireplace is exactly what you need to make it a winter wonderland.

To some people in our area there is nothing wonderful about this winter. To some that winter chill clings to their back for months. To the homeless in our community, a dog's comfort is the only heartfelt warmth from the dreaded winter months.

As people begin to sport their new brand name winter coats or jeans they received as gifts during the holidays, they tend to forget that many people go without the essentials to make it through the winter. When Executive Vice President of Compliance and Product Development at Ascentra Credit Union, Becky Hansen, first heard about the local outreach of her church Harvest Bible Chapel in Davenport she wanted to see what it was all about. She heard from a small group in her church about their involvement with King's Harvest, an organization that serves meals, provides shelter, clothing, and even assists with pet care for those who become homeless and are unable to care for their pets – all done without a charge. As part of their local outreach her church helps with the clothing ministry at King's Harvest.

"I never thought I would ever become one to help in a homeless shelter environment, but I decided to go once just to see what it was about," explains Becky. "I felt like God was nudging me in that direction and knowing that God does not necessary call the equipped, but rather equips those he calls, I obeyed."

Becky believes in working for what you have. She had in her mind that some people just didn't "deserve" to be given stuff and they would certainly not be appreciative.

"Boy, was I wrong. The guests that come to the clothing ministry at King's Harvest are some of the most polite, respectful and grateful people that I have met in my life," Becky said.

Some of the life stories she heard at King's Harvest are just heart wrenching and made her realize how close every one is to being in their situation.

Recently Becky got the staff at Ascentra Credit Union involved by asking them to provide any extra pairs of jeans they have around the house. King's



Harvest was in desperate need for donation, specifically jeans for men. The response from the staff was overwhelming. They came up with over 200 pairs of jeans and a whole lot more.

So on a Saturday morning Becky, along with her husband and daughter packed three SUVs full of the staff donations. There was so much stuff that she could not open the tailgates without bags falling out when they arrived.

“We have a wonderful staff here that really rallied to meet this need in the community; they are still bringing me items to donate. Two new volunteers came from the Ascentra staff to help out on a work night recently, and I have feeling they will be back!” said Becky.

Each person that seeks help at the donation site may be in need of a



winter coat, jeans, bedding or hygiene items but they also have a need for hope.

“Helping meet the physical needs of the poor is a command from God, but at the same time we share the love of God with them. That is something that they never need to lose,” she said.

If you wish to donate drop your donations off Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. To insure that your clothing reaches someone in need, please do not leave donations outside the building. King’s Harvest is located at 824 West 3rd St. Davenport, on the corner of 3rd and Warren. For more information on this organization and to see how you can get involved visit their website at [www.kingsharvest.net](http://www.kingsharvest.net).