



Hopatcong High School Senior, MaryRose Purdue, has made a habit out of collecting coats for underprivileged families during the winter months. In fact, over the last two years, MaryRose has gathered 201 new and gently-used coats of all sizes, and donated them to Project Self-Sufficiency. “She saw a need and decided to do something about it,” commented her proud mother, Barbara Purdue. “She decided to give them to Project Self-Sufficiency because she knew that they would be given to people who really needed them.”

Project Self-Sufficiency is a non-profit organization which serves low-income families in Sussex, Warren and Hunterdon Counties. The agency offers a wide range of programs to help individuals and families along the road to economic self-sufficiency and family stability, including computer classes, resume preparation and interview skills assistance, help with obtaining a GED, legal education, parenting courses, life skills groups, help with emergency basic needs, and many other services. The agency accepts donations for its food pantry, toys for the annual toy drive, turkeys at Thanksgiving, and clothing for the Working Women’s Wardrobe and the annual “Sister-to-Sister” Prom Shop. Until MaryRose came along, however, no one had ever offered the agency hundreds of coats for its clientele.

Hopatcong High School Principal Noreen Lazariuk whose facility helped to promote the coat drive and provided areas for the collection of the coats during the recent drive, applauded MaryRose’s commitment to helping her community, “I believe that one of the most valuable skills we can give to our students is the awareness of their place in a larger community and the fulfillment they will experience when giving to those in need.”

By all accounts, MaryRose Purdue is a special kid who has made a lifelong commitment to helping others. She volunteers with the Special Olympics each year and has traveled to Washington, D.C. on numerous occasions to advocate for the needs of those with juvenile arthritis. MaryRose plans to

study nursing in college with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner with a specialty in pediatric rheumatology.

“We commend MaryRose Purdue for coming up with a creative way to help those in our community who are less fortunate,” noted Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. “The winter of 2013-2014 has been particularly difficult for many of the families that we serve, and we are grateful to MaryRose and all of the members of our community who have lent a helping hand to our participants.”

To make a donation, or to find out more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsselfsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.



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