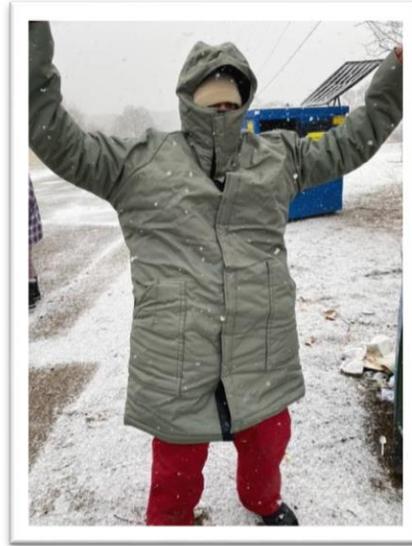


Sleeping Bag Coats: December 2020 update



On December 23, 2020, we met with Stacey Randolph, retired KDPS Captain, and several Police Officers at one of the homeless tent encampments in our area. Channel 8 WOODTV was present to do a short highlight as, together, we handed out 18 new sleeping bag coats to occupants of the tent city. <https://www.woodtv.com/news/kzoo-and-bc/people-experiencing-homelessness-in-kzoo-get-free-coats/>

As the days and nights get colder, several of us from First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo, and other local churches, parishes and organizations, have become aware of a simple way to help some folks who are sleeping outside, in and around Kalamazoo, to be a little more comfortable.

By providing these “sleeping bag coats” donors are, at the same time, providing jobs and training for formerly homeless people in Detroit who make the coats. In the last few weeks, our group has been able to distribute approximately 85 coats in Kalamazoo County. The positive feedback we have received has encouraged us to expand this local ministry as quickly as possible.

The Empowerment Plan organization has been in existence since 2012 and has distributed over 43,000 coats around the world since its inception. Best estimate I have is that in Kalamazoo County alone, we have well over 200 homeless folks. Our dream is that every single person who would benefit from this product would get one! Check out this non-profit organization at <https://www.empowermentplan.org/> and join us in helping some of God’s beloved who “ain’t got it so good” by donating \$131 (includes \$6 shipping) per sleeping bag coat.

You can go to their website to sponsor a coat yourself, organize a group to help raise funds or you can make a check out to Empowerment Plan and send it to:

Dick Shilts
2949 Sunset Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Dick will be sending checks in groups of five or ten to Detroit and the coats will be sent to his home for further distribution. Contact Dick Shilts at dcshilts@hotmail.com or (269) 567-8023 if you have further questions. This is one of those win-win no brainers!