

- Children's Clothing Exchange
- SolutionsWear
- Get Connected!
- Moving Up
- Wheels

solutions at work

Working to End Homelessness

Fall 2005

Wish List

Fall and winter clothing for ages 2–16, new socks, and new underwear for the **Children's Clothing Exchange**. Gently worn **interview-appropriate clothing** for men and women, for **SolutionsWear** (see page 2). We especially need women's sizes 14 and up. Contact us at CCE_SW@solutionsatwork.org or 617-576-0039 if you need a pickup or want to run a clothing drive.

Children's furniture—cribs, high chairs, etc.

Computers for **Get Connected!** Pentium II, 400 MHz or better.

Cars in very good condition and **bicycles** that are ready to ride. See **Wheels** on back page.

Office supplies—from pens to printer cartridges.

Volunteers

We need volunteers

- with cars, for clothing pickup and transporting car donors and recipients
- to supervise kids in the children's room at the Children's Clothing Exchange
- for office work
- to help with mailings and events

We also need a volunteer coordinator, and people with skills in finance, photography, public relations, interviewing/writing, and computer repair.

For up-to-date volunteer needs, see solutionsatwork.org

Coming Events

November 2: 9th annual Frostbite Open Golf Tournament.

December 21: Memorial service for people who died while homeless this year.

March 18, 2006: "Swing into Spring" dance to benefit Solutions at Work.


For further event information, see solutionsatwork.org

Macy's Corner

I am sitting down to write this in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's horrible devastation. All of us here at Solutions *know* what it's like to become homeless—to lose everything we have in an instant.

Many people see homelessness caused by natural disasters as "legitimate." But they see people made homeless by cultural disasters—breaks in our social fabric—as less worthy of help. In the outpouring of support for disaster victims, it is easy to downplay the ongoing disaster of homeless people scattered throughout our cities.

In this newsletter you can read about the recent developments that you, our supporters, have made possible, such as the opening of our SolutionsWear program. You can also learn about some of the needs that you can help fill. Below are some ways in which we have been helping people. I hope that you will use the reply form inside to send your generous donation to keep these programs operating and expand them further, and visit solutionsatwork.org to stay current on our programs.


Executive Director

A Peek at Some of Our Programs

Children's Clothing Exchange

- In the last 6 months we served 748 families, 143 of them new to the Exchange.

Moving Up

- In the last 6 months we have:
 - completed 167 moves;
 - employed 9 temporary transitional employees to work with our regular staff on the moving truck.

Get Connected!

- 51 people are using our computer center regularly.
- Since we opened in March we have given away 18 computers. There are 13 people on the waiting list.
- Some things our computer-center users are doing: writing articles for *Spare Change News*; legal research; learning graphic design; writing books.
- A donation by *Lawyers Weekly* has allowed us to upgrade all the computers in the computer center and our office.

SolutionsWear

- SolutionsWear opened on May 1. See article on page 2.

Wheels:

- Three people have received cars recently, and four are waiting. See article on back page.

Looking Great and Feeling Great—SolutionsWear Helps Job Seekers Prepare

by Gabrielle Watson

Do you remember back-to-school time, and that pristine notebook with all the blank pages ready to be filled? That set of new pens and perfectly sharp pencils? They were the final piece that completed your preparations for the big day you'd walk into the school building.

SolutionsWear is to our clients what the back-to-school notebook, pens, and pencils are to schoolchildren. Most men and women who are making the transition out of homelessness or prison do not have the wardrobe to match the new direction their lives are about to take, as they enter the job and housing markets. SolutionsWear fills that gap with quality professional clothing, providing three outfits—complete with shoes, belts, and accessories—for men and women who are actively job- or house-hunting.

Once they're employed, clients work with staff to complete the outfits or adjust the style for their specific job, bridging the time until their first paycheck.

According to Sonya Darcy, manager of both SolutionsWear and our Children's Clothing Exchange, no one else is doing things in this customized, customer-oriented way. "Our goal is to make things really easy to use. We want people who are using SolutionsWear to look great and to feel great about themselves," says Darcy.

The first impression is sometimes the only impression you get to make.

By working with referring agencies like job training programs, housing offices, prison ministries, and probation officers, SolutionsWear helps people who are truly ready to make the step to independent living and employment. They have the training and support of the referring program, and the clothing becomes that crucial piece that completes the puzzle for them. As Sonya Darcy points out, "The first impression is sometimes the only impression you get to make."

The Proof Is in the Putting On

Lori, a recent SolutionsWear client who was referred to SolutionsWear by a family shelter, was moved to write a letter. She writes: "I was very anxious about starting work, because I felt like I would not fit in." SolutionsWear super-volunteer Adonna helped her select her clothing. "I had a great experience and I received enough clothes to mix and match until I get on my feet. I have a nice little wardrobe now."

Another client was referred by a Cambridge food pantry. He was in a job training program and getting ready to begin interviewing. Also, his sons were graduating from high school, but he did not have anything to wear to the celebration. "He came in for one thing, and we were able to help him for two things. That felt great," reports Sonya Darcy.

Starting Out Small; Big Plans for the Future

SolutionsWear was formally launched on May 1, in a large room at the recently renovated and much enlarged Children's Clothing Exchange at 391 Evereteze Way in Cambridge. Staff and volunteer Adonna have been busy sorting and organizing the donated clothing. SolutionsWear is off and running in this beautiful space, thanks to very generous donations by Helen Hunt Bouscaren.

We need to establish a reliable stream of quality clothing to match the demand. Cibeline's, a clothing boutique located in Davis Square, Somerville, recently hosted a "Great Clothing Swap," where customers could swap clothing. The brainchild of boutique owner and designer Sabriano Cibeline, the swap was the second in their Thursday Night Fashion Series, which benefits local organizations. Leftover garments and \$1 for every \$5 in sales that night were donated to SolutionsWear.



Diana Paliotto is ready to interview for office jobs, thanks to SolutionsWear.

Organize a Clothing Drive for SolutionsWear

If you want to hold a drive at your workplace, club, neighborhood, or place of worship, Solutions at Work will provide posters and flyers to promote the event, and train volunteers to collect the clothing and provide tax receipts to donors. We especially need women's sizes 14 and up.

Harvard Business School students ran a clothing drive at the business school, netting a whopping 15 large bags of clothes for SolutionsWear.



Wanted! People to serve on committees: special events; outreach; program evaluation.

We recently received grants from:

- **Clipper Ship Foundation**—\$10,000 for general operating expenses
- **Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund**—\$8,000 for Moving Up, to support moves for low-income senior citizens
- **Harbus Foundation**—\$10,000 for the Children's Clothing Exchange

We are grateful to these foundations and to all the other organizations and individuals that support us.

We were very impressed with Solutions at Work and the Children's Clothing Exchange program through our application and site visit process, and believe that this grant will enable your organization to continue to increase its important impact upon the Cambridge community.
—Harbus Foundation



Clothing Exchange Manager Sonya Darcy (third from left) and Executive Director Macy DeLong (third from right) receive their grant check from the Harbus Foundation of the Harvard Business School.

Consider making a monthly contribution by credit card. Call 617-492-0300 x6.

SWING INTO MAY ...was a swinging good time!

Although April's showers were upon us, on April 30th supporters and friends of Solutions at Work enjoyed a fabulous evening at the "Swing into May" dance. The music of Harvey Cox and the Embraceables got us on our feet as we danced, dined, and bid on an array of silent auction items.

Thanks to Episcopal Divinity School, Ambit Press, Harvey Cox and the band, as well as Kowloon Restaurant, Picante Mexican Grill, Middle East Restaurant, Quebrada Bakery, and the Harvard Business School MBA program for providing the delicious buffet! Silent auction items were donated by Redbones Barbecue, Not Your Average Joe's, Darwin's Ltd., the Somerville Theater, Dance Boston, Dance Caliente, José Mateo's Ballet Theatre, Oliver Hughes Designs, James Boyk (pianist), Dinah Barlow and Suzanne Cooper (massage therapists), Patricia Ziegler and Barry Tepper (artists), and numerous individuals.



The party raised over \$5,000, which will go to supporting the programs of Solutions at Work. Mark your calendar for next year's dance on March 18, 2006!

**Don't forget the 9th Annual Frostbite Open Golf Tournament
November 2**

Call 781-643-7571 or visit solutionsatwork.org to play or sponsor.

I want to help Solutions at Work continue its award-winning programs in these difficult times.

Here is my tax-deductible gift of \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other: \$_____

Enclosed is my check payable to *Solutions at Work*

Please charge my VISA MasterCard

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

We also welcome on-line donations at solutionsatwork.org

Name: _____

Street: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please mail your contribution to:

Solutions at Work
PO Box 391349
Cambridge, MA 02139

Please do not publish my name

Please note changes to my name or address

My company's matching gift form is enclosed

Thanks to Ambit Press of Cambridge for donating the printing of this newsletter.

NL5-2

Wheels Make the Difference!

Sam Lowe recently gave us his car, which we have in turn given to Joanne Bergstrom, a formerly homeless woman who has been both a client of Solutions at Work and a volunteer. We asked Sam why he donated his car:

My old car had a lot of miles on it, but it was reliable and well-maintained. I knew I wouldn't get much for trading it in or selling it because of its high mileage, and that seemed like a waste. Also, I didn't want to donate it to a charity that would simply sell it to an auction company for \$60 and receive only these meager proceeds, while the auction company re-sold the car for its own benefit.

Luckily, I learned about the Wheels program at Solutions at Work, which accepts reliable used cars as donations and provides them to people

Donating my old car to Solutions at Work was one decision I didn't lose any sleep over.

who need them to access jobs or housing. For me it was a perfect match. I have long been a supporter of Solutions at Work: I have donated furniture, clothing, and money. I even served on a committee that approved making a grant to Solutions! I knew they would make the most of my donation, and that

the car was going to make a significant difference. This was one decision I didn't lose any sleep over.

Donating my old car to Solutions at Work was a great experience. The staff and volunteers made me feel like a million bucks. I appreciate all they do.

—Sam Lowe



I am building up a business cleaning houses, and need a car to get to my jobs and take cleaning supplies with me. It's a blessing to have this car. It's a good car, and I am truly grateful.

—Joanne Bergstrom,
Solutions at Work client and volunteer

We have turned away 20 people this year because we couldn't meet their needs. If you want to donate a car or bicycle in good condition, contact us at 617-492-0300 x6 or wheels@solutionsatwork.org. We especially need cars with automatic transmission. The fair market value of any vehicle you donate to us is tax-deductible.

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