

Who: Macomb Foster Closet

What: Offers clothing and goods to foster parents for their foster children

When: Now

Where: 196 N. Rose St. Mount Clemens, Michigan 48043

Why: Children have nothing and the Parents are often overwhelmed

How: Volunteers and donations

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500 Words

News Value: Proximity, Timeliness

Target Audience: People involved in foster care and Macomb local community

A second chance for children

Macomb Foster Closet is a non-profit organization that provides foster parents with much needed clothing and supplies for their foster children, as well as volunteer and donation opportunities for those looking to help.

When foster children are given to foster parents, they often come with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Foster parents usually have very little time to prepare, sometimes less than a few hours, and need the help of organizations like Macomb Foster Closet to provide the children with proper clothes, bedding and school supplies. The Closet also provides parents with the supplies they need to properly care for the child as well. Goods like car seats, baby monitors, strollers and carriers to name a few. For each child fostered, parents are able to come into the Closet and “shop” every three months, and may take up to 100 items. “We want to give them enough to get the children through 2 weeks,” said Mellissa Decker, vice president of Macomb Foster Closet, “that gives the parent enough time to get to the store and get what they need.” Decker also said that giving two weeks worth of clothing is important because it allows parents to wash the first weeks’ clothes while the child is wearing the second.

Macomb Foster Closet, while it may have Macomb in its name, is not limited to only the macomb area. The Closet’s doors are open to all foster parents and many come from hours

away to receive its services. Volunteers have noted that some parents come from as far as Ann Arbor and even Albion. Parents need only to show their foster's license and fill out a "shopper's form" to receive the Closet's services. No matter where they are from, the Closet makes sure that parents and children feel welcome and that they are in a safe place. "It's hard to walk your butt in and say 'I need help' so we try to remove that stigma," said Decker, "we are here to meet your needs. This is half supporting you with physical items and the other half is a support group." Parents who use the Closet's services regularly form a strong relationship with its volunteers. If a parent that is well-known by the Closet needs aid outside of operating hours, a volunteer will drive out to meet them. Decker said if a parent is very well-known and needs to "shop" urgently, the Closet will even give them a key. The children's needs come first.

Volunteers and donations are essential to the operation of Macomb Foster Closet. The Closet has no paid staff and operates transparently as an all volunteer organization. Those looking to volunteer may come in during operating hours and say they want to help. Hours of operation are posted on Macomb Foster Closet's Facebook page. Those looking to donate can do so directly from Facebook. Decker said, "We love Facebook donations. People don't even need to leave their home and we get 100 percent of the donation."