

JoAnn Stahler and SOUP group by Immaculate Conception (Kenton)

Joann and her army of helpers (approximately a group of twelve) provide hygiene and clothing for the SOUP recipients. The SOUP kitchen has volunteers from all the surrounding area churches provides a complete hot meal the last week of the month during the noon hour. Afterwards, they are invited to go to St. Anthony's Center to pick up toothpaste, soap, laundry soap or other items that food stamps do not cover. There is also available clothing that they may need, which includes shoes, coats, tops, bottoms and pajamas.

All items are free of charge. The toiletries are bought in large quantities as a result of Joann watching for store ads and using coupons to get the best deal she can. She has a relationship with store managers and they are willing to allow her to buy a case or more at a time.. She buys industrial bottles of laundry soaps and cleaning supplies and these are distributed in smaller family size containers so more people can be helped. Items are sorted and distributed to the clients by her helpers.

Clothing comes in from the parishioners or others in the community that know what we do. These are sorted by size and season by Joann and her helpers. Since we do not have a store, these items are set out and taken back up every month. At the end of the season, the left over items are given to other organizations in the community to be distributed in Appalachia or other needy causes. While the clients are going through the clothing, Joann and her helpers are providing conversation and frequently fashion consultation.

Recently, we had received a donation of 42 tubs of size 3plus and up clothing. These were sorted and notice went out to area food pantries and community health centers where extra-large clients were being served. A special distribution day was chosen to allow them first choice to the clothing.

Panera Bread products are also distributed during the week of SOUP. Joann and her helpers separate and re-bag the bread products so more clients can be served.

After the parish festival, items left over from the country store were offered to the clients from SOUP. Any items not taken were given to Goodwill.

Joann has been a good steward with the financial resources available for this ministry. She has a devoted set of helpers that covered for her when she went to Florida for the winter and they have befriended many that are regulars. They provide prayer messages in their bags of supplies and try to provide a helping hand where needed.