

CHS senior's community drive inspires winter giving to FISH

By Jessica Garcia
jgarcia@nevadaappeal.com

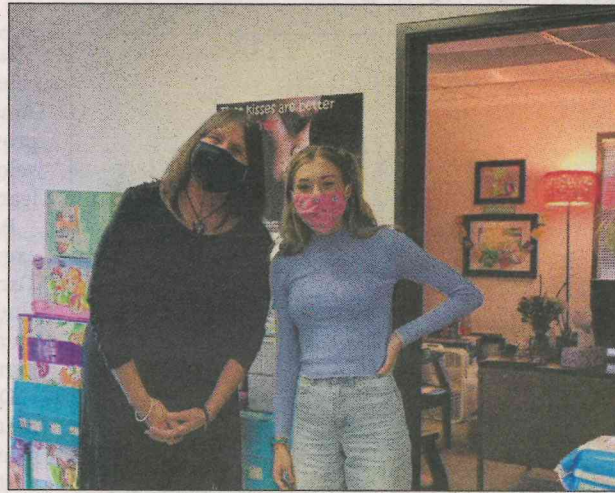
Donations collected in a community drive led by Carson High School senior Abby Golik will benefit Carson City's transient population for several months at Friends in Service Helping and the Ron Wood Family Resource Center.

Golik, who held the drive from Dec. 14 to Jan. 8 as a means of community outreach without having a required senior project this year for school, said the drive resulted in more than 8,200 items donated including socks, hats, gloves, toothbrushes and toothpaste, masks, diaper packages and training pants and other items of hygiene.

The collection was meant to help the city's homeless and foster children this winter when gloves, socks and diapers are still especially in need.

Golik's drive also received a \$100 donation to FISH and the nonprofit Pay it Forward provided \$500, which Golik chose to split between FISH and Ron Wood.

Abby Golik, with the help of her mother Angila Golik, who teaches at CHS, dropped off items to FISH on Jan. 13 and met



Ron Wood Family Resource Center Executive Director Joyce Buckingham and Carson High School senior Abby Golik stand in front of donations Golik provides from her community drive.

with staff members Jayme Durkee, Megan McKeon and Jim Peckham.

"It was amazing," Abby Golik said. "I think people were inspired by this and I was inspired by coming here. I had no idea everything that went on here, and after talking to Jayme and Megan, to know it was going to such a good cause because everything they do here is amazing – I want to say thank you to everyone who did donate and did help in any way possible."

Items donated from students at Carson High or other community members

included homemade blankets or knit gloves and socks, which Durkee said typically might be made specifically for women or men.

"People love that stuff," Durkee said. "They're struggling, and it'll go a long way for them."

Durkee said FISH maintains an excellent relationship with the Ron Wood center, with most of the diapers sent there to help low-income mothers in need of parenting classes.

Items such as razors, toothbrushes and toothpaste, especially travel-sized donations, will be placed into baggies by FISH volunteers or staff when it's slower for convenient handouts, she added.

While FISH's data on its clients constantly changes, Peckham said FISH currently serves approximately



COURTESY PHOTOS

Carson High School senior Abby Golik, center, drops off donations she gathered as part of a community drive she led from Dec. 14 to Jan. 8 to Friends in Service Helping, where she met with the service organization's staff, including operations manager Jayme Durkee, second from left, and marketing specialist Megan McKeon.

food and job assistance.

Projects like Golik's drive helps to support these ongoing daily immediate needs as well as the longterm developments FISH produces. Peckham said its Revitalization program currently is underway to transform the Whistle Stop Inn on North Carson Street into transitional housing to help families as well. The property has been purchased and will include 36 apartment units and retail space dedicated to underemployed men and women who were unable to attend or finish school.

workers will have the opportunity to finish their technical training at Western Nevada College in construction, health care, information technology or manufacturing in about six months and be shuttled to the campus. In the long run, it helps individuals find suitable housing while partnering with other local agencies who can best match needs using their services, Peckham said.

"And then they're able to afford marketplace rent as opposed to low-income rentals, which a lot of people to build low-income

make fewer people reliant on lower-income rentals," Peckham said.

Fundraising for the \$4 million project to convert the Whistle Stop is moving forward thanks to some provisions through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that stipulate the Internal Revenue Service can accept larger deductions this year.

Golik said shoppers who go to Smith's or Amazon are encouraged to choose FISH as their organization of choice if they have a membership so a portion of

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