



Supplies to reach shelter on Mother's Day

Posted by **Juanita Westaby** | **The Grand Rapids Press** May 08, 2009 08:03AM

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP -- Two Men and a Truck movers and the National Heritage Academies schools spent this month collecting items to be wrapped and given to women in the YWCA Domestic Crisis Center who likely will not otherwise get gifts on Mother's Day.

When you're fleeing domestic violence that could claim your life, the last thing on your mind is being remembered on Mother's Day. When women and children come to the YWCA Domestic Crisis Center, they often arrive with nothing to start a new life.

"The clothes on their back and a trunk full of toys for the kids" may be it, said Tom Cattrell, vice president for counseling services.

Last year, a similar effort "was completely unexpected," by the women at the shelter, Cattrell said. "The thought of celebrating Mother's Day while they're in a shelter is not even on their radar.

"When we can reach out and say, 'Your role as a mother is important,' it renews their sense of being valuable."

The concept of supporting mothers in crisis appealed to Kim Bryant, an admissions representative at Chandler Woods Charter Academy in Plainfield Township.

"You know how kids love their moms," she said.

Bryant told students: "These moms are less fortunate because they don't get the gifts and the love and the appreciation you show your mom on Mother's Day."

Students brought in hundreds of items.

In addition to Chandler Woods, Knapp Academy in Grand Rapids, Vanguard Academy in Wyoming and Walker Academy in Walker collected personal-hygiene items and clothing.

Two Men and a Truck started the campaign in 2008.

"There are a lot of moms who are under really hard times," said Rob Felcher, owner of Two Men and a Truck's Grand Rapids South franchise in Wyoming.

Two Men and a Truck already had a close relationship with the YWCA Domestic Crisis Center, since it

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To view what mothers fleeing domestic violence could use, go to <http://ywcawcmi.org/support-wishlists.php>

often does the moving when a mother and children return to get their belongings.

But many times, that isn't the case, and a mother must start from scratch.

"People don't appreciate the cost of running a household. It's the dishes and the pots and pans and the kids' sippy cups, the things that stock a kitchen, we really need," Cattrell said. "And bowls. Women with small children, they eat everything out of bowls."

Byrant said: "These are moms struggling to survive. A dozen roses would be nice, but that's not going to help them survive from one day to the next."

Donations can be dropped off before and during the West Michigan Whitecaps-Clinton Lumber Kings Midwest League baseball game at 2 p.m. Sunday at Fifth Third Ballpark, 4500 West River Drive NW in Comstock Park.

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