

# HEART-WARMING DONATION

## Kids collect 213 coats for charity

By Jeff Gilbride  
DAILY NEWS STAFF

WALTHAM – MacArthur Elementary School students have collected more than 200 coats for needy children this winter and expect to gather even more before year's end.

Third-grade teacher Kelly McAvoy and school nurse Rosella Saia have teamed up to run Coats for Kids, a program sponsored by Anton's Cleaners.

Saia said assistant principal Diane Fischer was contacted by an Anton's Cleaners representative about the coat drive. She asked the two women to run the program.

"It's really a very easy thing to do," Saia said. "The children would bring in a coat that was gently used. We just collected them each day and brought them to Anton's Cleaners (in Lexington), who would clean them."

Once the coats are washed and dried, Anton's Cleaners distributes them to agencies including the Waltham-based Middlesex Human Service Agency and the Salvation Army.

McAvoy said the response to

the drive was immediate.

"We hit the ground running. We contacted Anton's Cleaners to let them know we'd like to be partners in this effort. They were able to provide us with all the necessary fliers to send home to the families," McAvoy said. "We set up a great big depositing bin and just got the word out in the school community."

McAvoy said the first day of the drive they collected 12 coats. As of yesterday, the school had collected 213 coats in 19 days.

"That is about 58 percent participation of our students," she said. "We are really happy. It's brought the community together. It's been a whole school activity involving the staff and families as well."

Meghan Mullane, 9, said she donated an old coat "so kids or grown-ups don't freeze to death or die of cold."

Dylan Keller, 9, said the drive was important because "people that don't have homes are really, really cold this winter."

Andrew Nash, 7, said he donated "a wicked big coat" for adults that he found in the "mud

room" of his home.

Sean Trelegan, 11, said he donated a New England Patriots jacket to the drive because "everyone has to be warm or they'll get frostbite and maybe die."

McAvoy said the school will be collecting coats through Dec. 23, when the school begins its vacation week.

"I just really wanted to drive home that as a school, we're not just here to teach standards and curriculum," she said. "We're very proud of our students of how committed and interested they've been in the project."

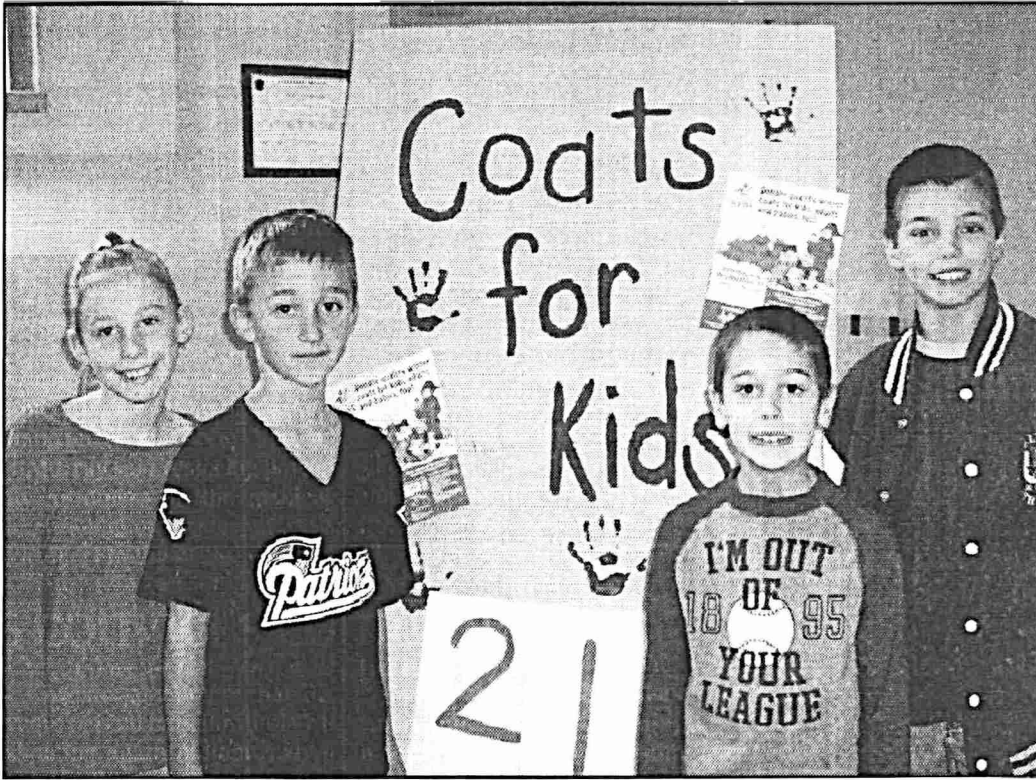
For more information visit [www.antons.com](http://www.antons.com).

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Kelly McAvoy

MacArthur Elementary School  
third-grade teacher





DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY JEFF GILBRIDE

**MacArthur Elementary School students Meghan Mullane, left, Dylan Keller, Andrew Nash and Sean Trelegan helped in their school's coat drive.**

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