

## Coats for Kids: Warming Hearts, One Coat at a Time Dedicated to Ensuring Local Children Stay Warm



***Orem-Lindon Rotarians and UVU Rotaractors present coats to students at Centennial Elementary School***

As the leader of the Utah International Mountain Forum Club at Utah Valley University (UVU), I had the privilege of collaborating with UVU Rotarians on a remarkable initiative that unfolded on December 1st, 2023. At 2:30 pm, Rotaractor Students from UVU joined forces with the Orem-Lindon Rotarians to bring warmth and joy to children in need at Centennial Elementary School.

Our shared mission was to donate coats, and this compassionate collaboration resulted in a generous contribution of 10 large bags, comprising over 60 brand-new coats. These coats arrived just in time to shield elementary children from the biting cold that followed Orem's first snowfall a mere week earlier.

This heartfelt donation marked a pivotal moment within the broader Coats for Kids Initiative, an annual endeavor aimed at bringing comfort to the lives of local children. In 2023 alone, this initiative raised funds and distributed 357 new coats to children across seven schools in the Orem area. Beneficiaries included Bonneville Elementary, Northridge Elementary, Cascade Elementary, Cherry Hill Elementary, Windsor Elementary, and Westmore Elementary.

Orem, with over 9,970 residents living below the federal poverty line, became the focal point of this impactful initiative. Orem-Lindon Rotary and UVU Rotaract share a steadfast belief that every family deserves warmth and access to quality clothing, regardless of their financial circumstances.

The Coats for Kids journey commences each year in February with a unique fundraising approach – the sale of freshly picked oranges from California. This fruitful endeavor sets the stage for subsequent phases of this heartwarming mission.

During the vibrant OremFest in the summer, Orem-Lindon, with the unwavering support of UVU Rotaract, hosts an all-you-can-eat Breakfast Fundraiser. This delightful event serves as both a fundraiser and a testament to the community's commitment to making a difference.

The meticulous process of selecting, purchasing, and sorting coats, often during sales, is followed by a collaborative effort with school administrations throughout the city. Together, they determine the most effective method for these coats to reach the children who need them most. And when all the pieces fall into place, the heartwarming deliveries begin!

Being an integral part of Coats for Kids 2023 has been an eye-opening experience, showcasing the profound impact that collective action can have on a community. The dedication of Orem-Lindon Rotarians in alleviating the hardships faced by countless families is a cause for celebration. As the president of Utah International Mountain Forum Club, I've come to realize that anyone can play a significant role in shaping the destiny of the community they serve. Together, we warm hearts and build a brighter future for all.

***Utah International Mountain Forum President - Stephan Atkinson***