

## 'Awesome' donation to Santa Rosa family shelter

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A handful of Montgomery High School students spent the first day of the winter holiday break on campus gathering coats and blankets before donating them Friday morning to the Catholic Charities Family Support Center in Santa Rosa.

"It was awesome," said Ashlee Wilson, vice president of the campus Leo Club that spearheaded the drive. "It was amazing to go and deliver stuff."

About 100 coats and blankets were collected at Montgomery by members of the year-old Leo Club, which is sponsored by Lions Clubs International.

"I'm just kind of watching it in amazement," said Donna Holmes, the club advisor and an English teacher at Montgomery. "They have just stepped up and really taken things on."

The drop-off Friday ended weeks of campus collection efforts.

"One of the biggest needs we have is blankets," said Jennielynn Holmes, program manager at the Family Support Center on A Street in Santa Rosa.

The shelter currently has 129 residents and is the largest one for families between the Golden Gate Bridge and the Oregon border.

"During this cold season, it's pretty full," she said.

The donation from Montgomery comes on the heels of donations of presents from students at Hanna Boys Center and gifts for every family in the shelter from Cardinal Newman students.

Blankets are especially useful at the Family Support Center in part because the building is old and heating is not always sufficient, Holmes said. Families who graduate out of the shelter typically are sent to their new home with supplies of staples, including blankets, she said.

Wilson said the tour of the family support center was the best part of the project.

"We wanted to brighten their Christmas," she said. "It was incredible. It makes me so much more grateful for what I have."

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KENT PORTER / The Press Democrat  
Claire Donnelly and her Montgomery High School classmates share a hug Friday after delivering donated blankets and jackets to the Family Support Center in Santa Rosa.

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