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Loveland residents are finding ways to make a difference this Christmas

Daily Reporter-Herald, The (Loveland, CO)-December 19, 2012
Readability: 9-12 grade level (Lexile: 1110L)
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Short on money, Loveland resident Angela Sanchez prayed for a way to give during the holidays.

Her answer came in the form of crafting supplies and plastic globes.

Sanchez, who was homeless for 2 1/2 months and now is living in an apartment and going to school, joined eight others Wednesday to make ornaments at the 137 Homeless Connection day shelter.

"It's like an answer to my prayers," Sanchez said as she tied a sparkly bow onto a plastic globe with a dangling star and confetti inside. "This holiday season, I didn't have any money. I have plenty of time."

The 137 Connection is selling the ornaments to churches, businesses and individuals through Monday to raise money for HELP International, a Loveland nonprofit that provides disaster relief and humanitarian aid worldwide. The nonprofit plans to transport needed supplies to the East Coast to help victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Shelter staff, volunteers and clients used donated and discounted crafting supplies to make 200 ornament globes and 50 stars. The ornaments each included a cutout saying, "137 Homeless Connection and Loveland remember the victims of Hurricane Sandy."

"The message is the same, then they decorate it any way they want to," Doug Ashbaugh said. He is the homeless program manager for the 137 Connection, which is part of the House of Neighborly Service.

The 137 Connection sold a few of the ornaments Thursday at a church's Christmas bazaar to test the idea and has sold nearly 100 so far. The ornaments sell for a donation of at least \$10 for the globes and \$5 for the stars.

"I'm homeless helping the homeless," Linda Carder, a homeless client of 137 Connection, said. "A lot of love goes into these. It's giving back to the needy, and it feels good."

Homeless client Diane Johnson agreed.

"It feels good because you're not only doing it for your joy, you're also doing it for somebody else," Johnson said.

Dena Trumbo, volunteer case manager, said one of the purposes of the ornament-making sessions was to reconnect the clients with hope and joy.

"They're so thankful for the opportunity to give," Trumbo said. "They've learned to have joy in this season. I've seen joy and hope in them and such teamwork."

The ornaments will be for sale today at the House of Neighborly Service 9-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. and at the 137 Loveland Connection today, Friday and Monday 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m. They also will be available at some churches for their members to purchase.

The 137 Connection plans to make additional ornaments for disaster victims during other holidays, such as Easter and Valentine's Day.

"I think we're going to sell them out," Ashbaugh said.

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Photo:

Clients and volunteers at 137 Connection make ornaments Wednesday to sell and raise money for Hurricane Sandy. From left are

Brett Uram, Linda Carder and Dena Trumbo.

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