



The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Warm Clothing Drive for New Immigrants Community Service Project 2018

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's 2nd annual warm clothing drive was held in December 2018. The Highlander Charter School students Lya and Leaslie Perez envisioned this as their community service project.

Last year, the Institute's youth organized a clothing drive to help new Puerto Ricans that were displaced by the hurricanes. This year, our young people were very concerned about the new immigrants who were arriving from Central America. They'd heard about controversial the "Border Wall" and felt bad for those who were arriving with very little, and no warm clothes. While they were born in the U.S., their family is from the warm island of Dominican Republic. They know how cold it gets in New England during the winter. We also gave warm clothes as gifts for teens at the United Way's Sweet Creations Youth Organization.

Leaslie has a gift for drawing, so she designed the cool poster. She talked with her Student Leadership Council teacher to ask for support. Amanda Iacampo thought it was a great idea - and helped Leaslie get the support from the school's Principal's office. Leaslie and Lya hung them around her school next to collection barrels. They shared their idea to rally students and teachers at their school to donate any slightly-used warm clothing.

They were excited to see how the barrels were filling up every day with warm clothes. They were thrilled when the consignment stores in Providence and Newport Togs on Brook donated their beautiful clothes too. They collected an enormous number of clothes (10 whole bags)! This wonderful project made their holiday season much more special!



My experience with the warm clothing drive was amazing! It was a great opportunity for me to share out my artistic skills with the love I have to help people. It started when my sister, Lya asked me to be part of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's community service project. As someone who is interested in arts, I was very happy to be asked to design the posters for the clothing drive. After I designed them, it was inspiring to see them in the digital format and printed out in big posters. The idea of helping those who were in need really inspired me to try my best for this project. After the posters were printed, I had the idea to put them around my school to spread awareness to my friends about all the people in need. My school was supportive and made an announcement, so everyone would know. Within 5 days, collected 3 huge bags to donate! I felt good about myself because I helped people who truly needed it.

Leaslie Perez, Future Designer



The warm clothing drive was great! My sister, Leaslie, drew a flyer and we printed it into big posters. We felt so proud when we brought them to hang around our school. I was especially proud since everyone was surprised at Leaslie's talent at creating posters. Our next big task was spreading the word. We inspired everyone at school to donate warm clothes they may have laying around, telling them that they could help those in need. After a few days, we collected a lot of clothes and shoes. Berta and Namgyal picked them up at our school. I was surprised at how many clothes we go (they were all very nice clothes too)! Leaslie and I helped sort them into different categories. We helped to sort out which clothes teens would want. Berta took lots of clothes for families that had just crossed the border! She let us know about the importance of this project and that we were very kind in volunteering for such a project. It is very important to give to others what they may need for the coming winter. I had a good time helping the needy and it puts a smile on my face, knowing that someone else doesn't have to suffer and that thanks to us, they will keep warm during this cold winter.

Lya Perez, Future Pediatrician

**Many Thanks to Berta Paleaz
Amanda Iacampo, Highlander Charter School**



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It was wonderful to work with Lya and Leaslie on the Institute's annual community service project. It was inspirational for me to see the youth evolve through this process. From the beginning, they really took charge. Leaslie designed the poster and took the lead in getting her school involved, while Lya helped to organize the project. Leaslie, especially, became more confident, evolving into a leader over time. I was happy to see her passion: she was very sympathetic to the plight of those who had very little and this made her work harder to ensure we had enough clothes to give to everyone. She took charge in talking to her school administration to include donations from the students and teachers of the school. Lya used her people skills and personal connections at the school, to appeal to teachers and students to donate to us. I was especially proud of how seriously they took the project, checking in with me every so often to update me on recent donations or actions that they had taken at school. On a more personal note, the community service project touched my heart. When I collected donations from the consignment stores I was amazed to see how many people were willing to give to those that were less fortunate. Thanks to Berta we reached out to some new refugees who had recently crossed the border. This especially, made the project extra special. That so many people were willing to support those fleeing terror, and seeking better lives, especially in today's political climate, was astounding! It was a great project to have been a part of!

Namgyal Gyaltsen, Project Coordinator