



**Joseph's  
Coat**

**Shopping Hours:**

Monday and  
Wednesday 9:00—  
12:00 and 1:00—  
4:30

**Donation Hours:**

Tuesday and  
Thursday 9:00—  
2:00

**FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT IS FULLY  
TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

**WE DO NOT  
PUBLISH, SELL,  
TRADE OR RENT  
DONOR  
INFORMATION.**

If you are interested in giving some of your time to help, please call 651-291-2472. We need volunteers to help with vacuuming and cleaning as well as sorting, helping donors bring in donations, assisting shoppers and drivers to take a carload of unusable donations to Goodwill.

# Joseph's Coat

SPRING 2016

## You Made a Difference for Karen

*This is Karen's story, but it could be mine. It could be yours, too. I write about our shoppers so that you know how much your financial support and donations mean to people who depend on Joseph's Coat.*

I met Karen one morning as I greeted our line of shoppers who were waiting to enter the store. She asked if she could leave some information about Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) for other shoppers.

"I have it," she said. "I don't want anyone else to miss the signs of this aggressive disease." I told her I was so sorry to hear about her illness and thanked her for thinking about others.



Karen has been raising four disabled children on her own for the past 16 years. She never dreamed that she'd be waiting in line with 100 other people to get into a free store. She noticed a rash on her breast one morning, and her world began to fall apart.

She had done everything she could to hold her life together—she did nothing to make it collapse. Karen worked for 26 years and faithfully paid for health insurance, long-term disability, contributed to her 401(k), and saved what she could. "I felt safe because I did all of the right things to take care of my financial future," she said. "I believed I was covered if I became sick, but I wasn't."

Karen has undergone chemo and radiation treatments, suffered a heart attack and had a double mastectomy. Yet cancer has now spread to her lungs, bones and spine. The cost is exorbitant. Long-term disability pays \$364 per

(Continued on back)

## Thank You to All Who Give to Joseph's Coat

You contribute so much to Joseph's Coat. Some of you volunteer. Some of you donate your gently used items. Some of you hold drives. Some of you make financial donations. Whatever your contribution, please know that your gifts are very much appreciated. The fast-paced atmosphere of Joseph's Coat can mean that communication isn't always what we'd

like. In the event you didn't receive a proper thank you from us, please understand that it is an oversight and not a lack of gratitude.



We are working with the St. Paul School District to support students who need to develop social interaction skills. You can help by recognizing that some expected communication, such as greeting you with a smile on a donation day and saying, "Thank you," may not occur. These are precisely the skills they are trying to learn. Thank you for your patience.

## You Made a Difference ....

*"It meant the world to me to be able to come to Joseph's Coat and let my daughter pick out a birthday gift for herself. You have no idea how important seemingly little things like this are until you are the one struggling."*

### A FEW NOTES...

- ◆ We cannot accept: TV sets, hangers (plastic or wire), sharp knives, adult diapers (such as Depends), used cosmetics, medical equipment, inoperable small appliances or telephones or electronics
- ◆ We need women's feminine products (tampons and sanitary pads), toothbrushes, travel size shampoo, conditioner, body wash and toothpaste, full size shampoo, lotion, conditioner and body wash.
- ◆ We are now accepting Spring and Summer clothing.

month, but COBRA costs \$785 per month. "It's not just the cancer; it's the finances, the emotions, and overwhelming fatigue," Karen told me. "All of my savings are gone. I will have to cash in my 401(k) in order to keep making my house payment." An ironic smile appeared on her face as she wiped away her tears and said, "Even if I live, I'll be broke and have to start all over. Kinda funny, isn't it? I was just thinking about what I would do when I retire in ten years or so . . . and then this. I always thought I was tough enough to face anything. I'm not."

Karen told me how Joseph's Coat had made a difference: "I haven't been in a mall since this all started. I can't afford it. I found nice blouses at Joseph's Coat that open in the front, which I absolutely needed while recovering after

my double mastectomy. Because of Joseph's Coat, I don't have to decide whether to buy groceries or shampoo when I can only afford one or the other. Then there are birthdays, weddings, Christmas.

It is so depressing when every dime you have goes to your care and you have literally nothing to spend. It meant the world to me to be able to come to Joseph's Coat and let my daughter pick out a birthday gift for herself.

You have no idea how important seemingly little things like this are until you are the one struggling."

Karen reached into the bag of items she found at Joseph's Coat on the day we talked. She showed me a scene of Cinque Terre, Italy on a jigsaw



puzzle box. Her face lit up as she traced her finger across the hills where she had hiked ten years earlier. She pointed to the fishing boats in the cove and told me how peaceful it was to watch them go out to sea each morning and return each evening, just as expected. As Karen puts the puzzle from Joseph's Coat together at home, I know she will travel back to that place where things happen the way we think they're supposed to.

## Joseph's Coat Happenings



St. Paul Police Officer John Corcoran and Gigi enjoy reading a book together while her Mom shops.



Our volunteers like working here so much they never want to leave. Marcella turned 101 on March 27. She has been a volunteer for 26 years.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please put your mailing address label in the enclosed self-addressed envelope and mail it back to us. Thank you.