

LAMP works to bring community together



Photos by The Times

Above: A L.A.M.P. Ministries volunteer asks a mother for her son's shoe size. Top right: Volunteers distribute blankets to Gainesville residents. Right: Volunteers distributed 150 pairs of shoes provided by Americans Helping Americans of Alexandria, Va., to children and adults.



Nonprofit helps 100s stay warm

L.A.M.P. gives winter outerwear to needy

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Winter is coming, and thanks to the generosity of a national organization, Gainesville-based nonprofit L.A.M.P. Ministries was recently able to help more than 300 people get ready.

Americans Helping Americans shipped 240 brand-new children's winter coats, 150 winter hats, pairs of gloves and scarfs, 150 pairs of shoes, 100 blankets and 100 containers of laundry detergent.

Mary Mauricio, executive director, said more than 300 people took advantage of the items, which were distributed Oct. 23 in the St. John Baptist Church parking lot. The event, Mauricio said, was scheduled to run from 3-6 p.m., but all of the items were claimed within 30 minutes.

Some of the children who came didn't have shoes.

"We were able to meet the need," Mauricio said.

L.A.M.P. Ministries, according to its website, is "a faith-based organization that depends solely on God and the good will of the community to stay operating and doing the job we have been called to do. Our goal is to reach out and shelter as many teens as possible; from every race, color, religion and creed."

Mauricio said the materials went so quickly that some children didn't get the items, and L.A.M.P. hopes to provide such items for them in the near future.

Steve Hunt, communications coordinator of Alexandria, Va.-based Americans Helping Americans, said the items L.A.M.P. distributed had an in-kind value of \$24,550.

Americans Helping Americans will also be providing the turkey for L.A.M.P.'s Nov. 21 Thanksgiving dinner, Mauricio said.

Mauricio said she appreciated everything sent by Americans Helping Americans and all of the volunteers who helped on Oct. 23.

According to a press release, Americans Helping Americans' philosophy "is to nurture inclusive communities, create support networks and determine the necessary strategic actions to address chronic, but preventable, problems."

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