

Pontiac Nonprofits Work Together to Meet Needs

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Pontiac, MI

The Baldwin Center is finding a new way to get clothing donations into the hands of clients through a pilot collaboration with the Oakland HOPE Thrift Store. Oakland HOPE will now receive clean clothing donations on behalf of the Baldwin Center and accept vouchers from Baldwin Center's clients.

For years, the Baldwin Center has received clothing donations and operated a free Clothes Closet, a house turned shopping space, but there was a problem.

"Due to limited staff and the constraints of a house, donors and shoppers had to set appointments and live with some restrictions," said Elizabeth Longley, executive director of the Baldwin Center. "Our approximately 20 shoppers a month had a limited amount of time to shop, and we seriously restricted donations based on our lack of space. In addition, we had to close for 4-6 weeks every year to keep that small space organized," she said.

"This year, we had to find a better way."

That search for a better way connected Longley to Norma Okonski and Oakland HOPE.

"We are always looking for ways to collaborate on behalf of our community," said Okonski, Oakland HOPE's director. "Our thrift store has space, staff and set hours of operation—we accept clean clothing, no appointment necessary."

"Clothes Closet supporters should know that when they bring their donation to the Oakland HOPE Thrift Store, Baldwin Center clients are supported," said Okonski.

Clothing donors should visit the [Oakland HOPE donation page](#) for more information on donation policies. Baldwin Center clients and community members with a need for a shopping voucher should call the Baldwin Center at 248-332-6101 to learn more about the program.

Longley said that the Baldwin Center will continue to keep coats and some emergency clothing on hand. She estimates that this collaboration will save about \$25,000 annually.

*For over 40 years the Baldwin Center has been providing critical services to the underserved population in the City of Pontiac, Michigan and the surrounding area. The Center feeds over 60,000 meals per year in its community kitchen along with 20+ other critical programs and service. We believe in the strength of human dignity and the resilience of the human spirit as we continue to **feed, clothe, educate and empower!***

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