

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Valley Counseling distributes food, clothing

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WARREN - The cold weather Wednesday morning seemed to drive home the point that a vulnerable population needs as much help this holiday as possible.

In 40-degree weather, clients of Valley Counseling lined up 90 minutes ahead of time at the East Market Street office to receive food and other items for Thanksgiving. About 100 turkeys and 50 chickens were among the items.

“So many of our clients are in need of clothes, shoes, food for the holiday, so I think it was a real good time for it,” said Katina Quarles, a case manager for Valley Counseling.

Valley Counseling is a nonprofit behavioral health-care provider.

“With the economy, people losing jobs, there is an urgent need,” Quarles said, adding that having such a large group show up ahead of the 9 a.m. start of the giveaway “tells you there is a pretty great need.”

Jody Klase, director of development for Valley Counseling, says what made this distribution unique is that the employees were the ones who decided to start the project, which is new this year.

The case managers felt the need the most, because they are the workers who visit clients in their homes, Klase said. They help clients keep their utilities on, search for employment or housing, take them to appointments and make sure they get their Medicaid and other assistance.

“I like the fact that they are doing this. There are a lot of people in this city who need the help,” said Jill Culp of Warren as she left the facility with bags of goods.

“There’s so many people around here who lost their job and are homeless that there’s some people not getting help, but [Valley Counseling] are actually helping. It’s one thing we’re all grateful for.”

The employees put together the giveaway, donating items as well as bringing clothing from home to give out.

Valley Counseling’s foundation — called the Valley Community Mental Health Foundation — provided additional cash. Much of the money comes from fundraising activities, Klase said.

Andrea Bovo, another case manager, said Valley Counseling frequently refers people in need to other agencies for assistance such as housing and food.

“This time we wanted to do something ourselves,” Bovo said. “All of us got together and decided it would be nice for our clients. For a lot of them, we’re the closest thing they have to family.”