

**Tough Times Prove to be a Call-to-Action for PR Firms and Their Clients
A Case Study**

By

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Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series highlighting examples of New Jersey area companies that have made a positive impact on their communities.

Public relations firms and businesses should keep in mind that there will always be people in need – not just during the holiday season, a catastrophic event or a slowing economy. Developing an ongoing philanthropic program for every client is an essential part of any public relations plan. Below is a sampling of some of the activities that occurred throughout the New York Tri-state area during the 2008 holiday season:



Thousands of New Jersey residents had warm clothing to help cope with the winter chill, thanks in large part to the quick actions and generous hearts of several New Jersey businesses.

Upon hearing that the slowing economy has had a deep impact on charitable organizations, resulting in a growing population in need of help and a shrinking pool of donors with fewer resources, a number of tri-state area firms decided to heed the call for help.

For example, three companies based in Bergen County, N.J., we represent – **The Allendale Community for Mature Living, Borst Landscape & Design, and The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 164** – have a long history of community-oriented work and did not hesitate to reach out to their team members, customers and neighbors to help the less fortunate in the region.

The Allendale Community, which offers three distinct senior residences on one campus, hosted a Holiday Clothing Drive to benefit the Clothes Line Thrift Shop at Archer United Methodist Church in Allendale, N.J. The project was incorporated as part of the Allendale Community's campus-wide "Caring for the Community" outreach program.

Borst Landscape & Design, an award winning full-service landscape firm, chose the Star of Hope Thrift Shop in Paterson as the recipient of its donations. Borst's four-week clothing drive filled six of their vans with clean, gently-used men's, women's, children's and infant's clothing brought to Borst's headquarters in Allendale by scores of generous employees, clients and neighbors.

The Salvation Army benefited from IBEW Local 164's clothing drive. The donations were dropped off at the Local's Training Academy, located at 65 W. Century Road in Paramus, and the response from members and the community exceeded expectations.

Local 164 performs community outreach projects consistently throughout New Jersey. Recent efforts included Rebuilding Together Bergen County, an annual home repair event to help seniors and families in need, and Habitat for Humanity.

Real Estate Clients Rally the Troops

Adding another dimension to the holiday's fundraising activities, two commercial real estate clients participated in the clothing drives with involvement from tenants, increasing good will in their buildings and generating a "good neighbor" image in their communities.

Prism Capital Partners, a real estate investment company headquartered in Englewood, N.J., held clothing drives to benefit the Salvation Army at two properties: One Harmon Plaza in Secaucus and BroadAcres Office Park in Bloomfield. In just nine days, they filled more than 200 oversized bags with clothing.

Similarly, **Gyrodyne Company of America Inc.**, a Long Island-based real estate investment trust, contacted tenants at two properties: their headquarters building at One Flowerfield in St. James, N.Y. and the Cortlandt Medical Center in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. They also reached out to the general community and collected box-loads of clothing to benefit the Salvation Army Thrift Stores in Peekskill and East Northport, N.Y.

In addition, **NAIOP**-New Jersey, a leading trade organization for the commercial and industrial real estate industry publicized its coat drive to members over a two-week period and collected more than 200 garments for the Salvation Army in New Brunswick just in time to help area residents cope with the winter chill.

On the residential real estate side, **The Walters Group**, a rapidly growing builder in southern New Jersey, collected roughly 3,000 garments in a month-long drive to benefit The Salvation Army. Proceeds from the sale of the donated goods will be used to aid the Adult Rehabilitation Center in Trenton.



Caption: IBEW Local 164's John DeBouter, president (left), and Richard Dressel, business manager (right), along with Local 164 volunteers recently assisted David Cranford (center), administrator, The Salvation Army, load more than 100 bags of clothing for distribution statewide throughout the holiday season.