



Kathy Ditchfield for the Chronicle

The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony recently at The Path of Citrus County Thrift Store. Chamber ambassadors and directors were present for the ceremony. Chamber representatives from the back left are: Pete Burrell and Kevin Cunningham, front left; Chamber of Commerce executive vice-president, Betty Pleacher; Jacquie Hepfer, Inverness City Council; The Path board members, Tom Upton and Dottie Roberts; director, DuWayne Sipper, secretary, Diane Fudge; and ambassadors, Reyna Bell, Nancy Coffey, and Kandy Kremnetz. The Path Thrift Shop is located at 1760 N. Highway 41, Inverness, near the Roller Barn. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Path of Citrus County is a non-profit organization that is planning to build a shelter for anyone finding themselves without a home in Citrus County. Proceeds from the thrift store will help finance the building. For information about donations and volunteering call 341-0551.

## Design appreciation

DuWayne Sipper, left, executive director of The Path of Citrus County, recently presented *Chronicle* Online account representative Steve Tallman a plaque in appreciation for the efforts put into designing the mission's Web site. The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions recently awarded The Path's Web site third place for its design. Almost 100 missions were compared for the competition. To visit the site, log on to [www.pathofcitrus.org](http://www.pathofcitrus.org).

Wed. Oct. 10th 01



# Charities have things in store

By Jan Witherspoon  
Staff writer

Bargain hunters love them — and many people need them. Thrift stores, where pots, pans, plates and pillows are found among thousands of items that range from baby clothes to knives and forks.

The stores also provide a much-needed place to buy clothes and household items for those who can't afford the high prices of new merchandise.

In Citrus County, there are several local charities that operate thrift stores as a way to boost the amount of money they have available for operational funds.

At Citrus United Basket, Nola Patterson Gravius, said CUB doesn't



Dave Siger/Chronicle

**Bea Wheeler was looking for a black jacket during her recent visit to the Key Center Thrift Store in Inverness.**

make much money off its thrift store because most of the items are given away. CUB offers clothing to young women who are starting jobs and don't have proper work attire.

"Any money we do make, we buy food," she said.

"The more we get, the more we give."

This year, CUB provided 2,000 Christmas dinners to people in need of help. "We're so happy people gave like they did this year," she said.

"This is 22 years for CUB. The coun-

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## DONATE AND SHOP

**Hospice** — 341-2220.

**Daystar** — 795-8668.

**Key Training Center** — 795-6493, 628-1115, 726-0271, 527-0037.

**Citrus United Basket** — 344-2242.

**The Path** — 637-7284.

**Salvation Army** — 621-5532.

**Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch** — 795-8886.

**Pregnancy and Family Life Center** — 344-3030.



# STORES

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ty is growing and the need is growing. We see a lot more younger people than we used to."

Hospice has operated a thrift store since 1998 and in May 1999 moved into a bigger location in Inverness. Denise Tobin, director of community relations, said since the store relocated, business has doubled. And that keeps Hospice helping its clients.

The money that comes from store sales contributes significantly to provide services like grief counseling, grief workshops, helping to pay for pain medications, providing nursing care, home health aids, social workers and chaplains.

"It might be the thing that helps us provide somebody with a hospital bed," Tobin said.

People who donate items to Hospice and those who frequently shop there are often the same people who have been helped by Hospice in times of need.

"And there's something about being there," Tobin said. "People feel comfortable there and talk about their losses. People who have had a Hospice experience want to talk about it."

Daystar Thrift Shop is an outreach program under the auspices of St. Benedict's Church and was initiated by Fr. James Hoge around 1987.

The agency assists people with overdue power bills, those facing eviction notices, people needing help with food or clothing, and those hurt by natural disasters or fires. Daystar, which steps in when the Red Cross makes a referral, also provides household items to those in need.

The thrift shop is self-supporting; donations are sold and provide financial assistance for service projects.

According to bookkeeper Pat Reinhard, the store plays a significant role. "We receive donations from United Way and private resources, but the store has become a very significant factor in our income. When people shop, there they are helping people that are in need."

Daystar assisted close to 2,000 families this past year, and some of those families were helped as many as six times with food. Financial assistance is only given to a family once during a year. It is also a Federal Emergency Management Agency affiliate, and the United Way handles the local distribution of FEMA funds. The thrift store is run by 60 volunteers who are active, and another 20 who serve when needed. Daystar's assistance is confined to those who live in Citrus County.

The Key Training Center has four thrift stores in the county that provide \$400,000 in gross revenue to the center in a year. Although the income from the stores is an important financial factor, the stores also

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provide a work situation for the Key Center's clients who receive an income and vocational training.

Mark Jacobs, director of development and community relations, said "The positions include tagging merchandise, sorting clothes, many of the things that are done in thrift stores are done by our clients; it's a win-win for the client and the agency.

"It's a synergistic opportunity and well-suited for an operation like ours."

Last August, a new thrift store opened in Inverness. The Path store was opened by DuWayne Sipper in order to raise money to help build a Rescue Mission for those who need temporary shelter.

"From the four months we've been in business, we've not raised a lot of money, but the other things that have happened have helped," Sipper said.

The Path store sells a grocery bag of clothing for \$10. The thrift store offers items like household goods and furniture.

Although the store hasn't raised much money, it has helped shelter organizers receive public awareness for their main project.

"There's a lot of people who don't understand what homelessness is," Sipper said. "Ninety percent of homeless people are a battered woman, a pregnant girl, a man who is injured and out of work. We want to give them a place to stay until they can do it on their own."

The Path also operates a coffeehouse on the weekends for those who are looking for someplace to go. There's usually entertainment of some sort, sometimes karaoke, videos and lots of talking. There are games and singing happening most of the time. Soon, Sipper hopes to see the coffeehouse open six nights a week.

"It will take the whole community" to get the Rescue Mission up and running, he said.