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Rain did not deter shoppers

By Teresa Dunham
The Winchester Star

Winchester — Despite heavy rainfall, dozens of eager shoppers swarmed Friday outside the new location of Blue Ridge Hospice's Winchester Thrift Shop before the doors unlocked.

"They've been knocking on the door for the past two weeks and wanting to come in," said Jacki Mumm, thrift shop coordinator.

The newly relocated store's official opening at 116 Featherbed Lane came exactly three years after the original thrift shop made its debut on Valley Avenue in Winchester.

"I think the customers were really driving the boat on getting a new space," said Mumm.

The move nearly doubled the shop's space from 4,500 square feet to 8,000 square feet, said Blue Ridge Hospice Chief Executive Officer Ernest Carnevale Jr.

"We really were needing more space to sort the clothes," Carnevale said, adding that the thrift shop outgrew its former location within the first year of operation.

The spacious new place drew a mix of nearly 100 volunteers and shoppers within the first half-hour it opened — and those folks gave lots of positive feedback.

"I love it. It's brighter. We've got a lot more room," said Gloria Flanders, a store volunteer from Frederick County.

Shopper Kay Anderson of Winchester also gave a big thumbs-up to all the clothing,



People crowded into the new Blue Ridge Hospice Thrift Shop on Featherbed Lane during the grand opening on Friday. The store relocated to that site from Valley Avenue.

(Rick Foster)

accessories, household goods, and other unique finds.

"The other store was very small. It got to the point where they had so much inventory ... they were stacking things in the back," said Anderson, who frequented the old location.

Mayor Elizabeth A. Minor came to offer her support at a 10 a.m. ribbon cutting.

"They do such a wonderful service for the community," said Minor.

Based in Winchester, Blue Ridge Hospice provides in-home care for terminally ill patients in Winchester and Frederick, Shenandoah, Warren, Clarke, and Page counties, along with western Loudoun County.

The non-profit cared for more than 850 patients and assisted more than 2,000 family members through its grief and loss services last year.

Hospice's store on Featherbed Lane is among four other thrift shop locations in Stephens City, Purcellville, Berryville, and New Market.

The local store only closed for 11 days before its grand relocation, said Carnevale.

"I know that this is definitely the champion thrift shop for hospice," said Mumm.

These thrift shops make a huge financial difference, Carnevale said.

Though 2007 numbers were not yet available, he said the stores raised more than \$100,000 in net profit in 2006 — and that's when only the Winchester and Purcellville locations were open.

All shop profits go directly to hospice patients and their families, said Carnevale.

Store hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Donations of new and gently-used items are welcomed.

For more information, call 540-536-5210, or visit www.blueridgehospice.org.

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