

A NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT consultant in the Boston area, Andrea Shapiro '88 had long been perplexed by the fact that shelters and other organizations serving the homeless and poor in her Massachusetts community had "piles and piles" of donated clothing but no efficient means to sort, store, and distribute them to those in need. "They were accepting donations but were not really able to manage them," Shapiro says. She decided to take on the challenge and create a "new and different" clothing-donation program—Second Chances.

Since 2005, when it received nonprofit status, Second Chances has collected more than 200,000 pounds of used clothing, co-sponsored more than 150 clothing drives, and donated almost \$50,000 worth of clothes, shoes, accessories, and gift cards to some 1,600 homeless and low-income people in Cambridge and Somerville. Recipients have a range of needs. "For some it's just making it through the winter," Shapiro says, "and for others it's getting a job."

So, how is Second Chances "new and different"? It's practically invisible in that it works through existing service providers, such as homeless shelters. Local business and property owners provide storage space for the clothing, and Second Chances volunteers do all the sorting and delivery to the appropriate agencies, which then distribute the clothes. It utilizes social media to get the word out about clothing drives and other events, and boasts a high level of volunteer labor and involvement. Although Second Chances has a ten-year goal of expanding into Greater Boston, it plans to stay small and focused—and hopefully serve as a model for other nonprofits. "I really believe in what we're doing," Shapiro says. "That's what makes me excited about this."

—Christina Barber-Just

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