

Bank donates sign, gives Fair Tide Thrift Store a boost

Helps bring in new customers

By Robert Levey

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KITTERY, Maine — For years, Anne Hunter, manager of Fair Tide Thrift Store, has heard the same thing from first-time customers.

"People would always say, 'We never knew you were here before,'" Hunter said.

However, according to Hunter and Fair Tide Executive Director Joe Galli, all that changed this past fall when Ocean Bank in Kittery donated the money needed to purchase a new sign for the store. Hoping the sign would at least help bring in local customers, Galli said it has affected their business far more than he and his staff expected.

"It caught us off guard," Galli said. "People just started pouring into the store — and it wasn't just locals, either. We started getting tourists, too. It's been amazing."

Hunter agreed and said the new sign has achieved more in terms of garnering new customers than anything else they have ever done.

"For years, we tried to figure out ways to grab tourists on their way to the outlet malls, but without any success," she said. "The sign has made a huge difference."

Maureen Raynes, assistant vice president and market manager of Ocean Bank in Kittery, said she and the bank could not be happier with the effect the new sign has had on the store's business.

"We are thrilled at the success of the Fair Tide Thrift Store and our role in helping them reach their goals," Raynes said. "We believe in Fair Tide's mission to end homelessness on the Seacoast and it's our hope that successes like this help to build momentum."

According to Galli, store sales have increased by 25 percent over the same time period from the year before since the sign went up.

"We're getting more donations, too," he added.

Fair Tide was founded in 1998, and offers targeted support services that include education, life-coaching, and individual and group counseling in addition to short-term, affordable housing.

Ocean Bank, with 38 branches in New Hampshire and Southern Maine, is a division of People's United Bank, a federally-chartered savings bank with \$20 billion in assets.



Ocean Bank's donation of funds for a new sign for Fair Tide Thrift Shop has helped bring in new donations and customers. From left, Maureen Raynes of Ocean Bank in Kittery, Maine, Anne Hunter, manager of Fair Tide's Thrift Store, and Joe Galli, executive director of Fair Tide. Courtesy photo

FAIR TIDE THRIFT STORE

Where: 15 State Rd, Kittery, ME

Hours: from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday to Saturday

Contact: (207) 439-6376;

thriftstore@fairtide.org;