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Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pictured in The R.A.C.K. room (left to right) is Justin Stetka, Business Administration Manager of Loews in Holmdel, which donated storage containers, clothing racks and closets to outfit the room. Thorne teachers Sue Mosley and Kristyn Corace welcomed Mr. Stetka on the debut of The R.A.C.K program.

Thorne Middle School Debuts Two Important Additions

The Lion's R.A.C.K.--Random Acts of Clothing Kindness and The Vocational Room

Middletown: On Thursday, February 18, 2010, Thorne Middle School unveiled two very important additions to their school community---*The Lion's R.A.C.K.*, an acronym for *Random Acts of Clothing Kindness* and *The Vocational Room*, a life skills activity center for students with special needs.

The R.A.C.K. will be an on-going clothing drive providing a comfortable place for students to go "shopping" for needed clothes at no cost to them. Two special groups of students will operate *The R.A.C.K.*: the multiple disabilities class, who will be sorting clothes according to type, and the Alternative Education Program (at-risk students), who will run all other aspects of the program, including identifying sizes.

Special Education teacher Kristyn Corace comments, "Many students here at Thorne need assistance with clothing. As our students are always provided with help from teachers and the community, this presents an opportunity for them to give back to other people. The program is modeled on the legacy program created by a beloved Thorne teacher, Kathleen Weinstein, who started the *Random Acts of Kindness* at Thorne. Tragically, we lost this wonderful lady and educator in a senseless murder years ago. We view this program as a way of continuing her tradition of helping others selflessly."

Ms. Corace and Sue Mosley, the Alternative Education teacher, both collaborated on this program, believing their two classes would work very well together. They then set out to contact various businesses for help in making the room an affordable reality. Justin Stetka, Business Administrator Manager of Loews, answered the teachers' request with a very tempting invitation to "go shopping" in his Holmdel store. The ladies loaded a few carts with storage containers, clothes racks and portable closets.

Mr. Stetka and Loews were only too happy to help. He comments, "We get lots of requests, but we had no problem doing this for them as it involved the needs of others."

On the day of the opening, eighth grader Jordan Barrett was busy sorting and folding clothes. He remarked, "I like helping my school and people who need clothes."

Sue Mosley explains that *The Lion's R.A.C.K.* program instills the values of good citizenship and promotes social and communication skills in her students.

She adds, “This experience also teaches important life skills and enhances the student's self-esteem by allowing them to help others who are less fortunate than themselves.”

On one wall of the room shared with *The R.A.C.K.* clothing facility is *The Vocational Room*, a special place created for Thorne’s students with special needs to work on employment and life skills, which are essential for success in the high school vocational programs. The students in the Multiple Disabilities (MD) and Language and Learning Disabilities (LLD) classes will work in an office-like environment with appropriate equipment. Activities include using a copy machine, sorting mail, preparing materials for and using paper shredders. Students work on increasing their fine and gross motor skills by sorting items, completing assembly projects, using a letter-making machine, filling out electronic job applications, cleaning and other custodial jobs and much more!

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(LEFT) Eighth grader Jake Rusignuolo folds clothes on the debut of the *Random Acts of Clothing Kindness (R.A.C.K.)* program, a collaboration of Thorne’s Multiple Disabilities Class, and the Alternative Education Program. He states, “I feel good helping out people.”

(RIGHT) John Speranza, Thorne 7th grader, sharpens a pencil, one of many tasks he can practice in *The Vocational Room*, which debuted in the same space as *The R.A.C.K.* program. The students in the MD and LLD classes will use the room as part of their career class to help them train for the requirements of the high school vocational programs.

