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WHERE TO DONATE  
KIDS' TOYS, BOOKS  
AND MORE

**B4**

**OUT**  
with the **OLD**



Warehouse coordinator Yeaye Stern embraces the holiday spirit and welcomes new and gently used books at Book Fairies in Freeport.



# DONATE for a fresh start

Where to drop off baby items, books, children's clothing and so much more

BY CATHI TUROW  
Special to Newsday

A child who has outgrown driving Barbie around in a pink convertible can donate the toy to someone who will be happy to take the doll on a new road trip. A teen whose "Team Conrad" sweatshirt ("The Summer I Turned Pretty") no longer fits can donate it to a tween who would love to wear it. If chapter books are collecting cobwebs on a college student's shelf, volunteers in charitable organizations can find new homes for those stories.



Nakwan Hailley works the boutique section of The INN, which features baby and children's items.



Executive director Eileen Minogue, left, and volunteer Laurie Greco sort titles at Book Fairies in Freeport.

Throughout the year, donation centers on Long Island are constantly in need of gently used or new children's clothing, books, and toys.

Some donors have a routine. At the end of every season, Erica Rothchild, 53, of South Huntington and her 11-year-old son, Aidan Nocito, go through Aidan's shirts, pants, pajamas, jackets and more. She and Aidan pack up what no longer fits and drive to a charitable organization where they can see the clothes go directly into the hands of those who need them. Rothchild adds, "I try to schedule a donation time when Aidan can go with me. I want him to notice it's something we can do, and we're helping other people in our community."

Other donors combine memories with future dreams. Angelina Widmer, 16, of Wantagh has been donating her books, clothing and dolls for the past six years. She says, "I had an American Girl doll I really

liked, but by sixth grade, I'd outgrown it. I donated it to charity and was a little upset at first. But then I knew another girl would get to play with it, and appreciate it, the way I did when I first got it."

Here are four charitable organizations where new or gently used seasonal children's clothing, books and toys will end up in new hands.

**BOOKS: BOOK FAIRIES**

This donation center is a haven for those who would like to give away books to people of all ages. "But kids' books are our bread and butter," adds Eileen Minogue, executive director. "The books go to children in under-resourced communities. If you have books that are in good shape and you don't know what to do with them, we welcome them here."

Minogue marvels at all types of donors. She says, "Some parents come in with their youngest child and give away a book all

the children in the family have read. Grandparents come in with books they've read to their children and grandchildren and want to offer another child a chance to read them."

Widmer donated all 30 of her "Angelina Ballerina" books. Now, as a teen, donating books has become part of her process. Widmer says, "Whenever I finish reading a book that I own, I donate it."

Book Fairies has an ongoing need for baby board books, chapter books (such as "Dog Man" by Dav Pilkey and Haruno Nakai), Spanish language books and reads on topics related to diversity.

"They can also use more books in Spanish and on topics related to diversity. Schedule a drop-off donation online, or a pick up for five or more boxes.

**ON THE COVER: Angelina Widmer, 16, of Wantagh has a tradition of donating books to Book Fairies in Freeport.**

**MORE INFO** 70 N. Main St., Freeport; 516-557-6645; [thebookfairies.org](http://thebookfairies.org)

**KIDS' TOYS AND CLOTHES: HELPING HANDS RESCUE MISSION**

Children's clothing and toys that have been well taken care of will be happily accepted in this center. (Donations for adults are also accepted.) Kim Gambino, president and pastor, says, "Some children donate birthday gifts they have never played with. Other children forgo their birthday presents completely and collect toy and diaper donations for the mission instead."

The center also encompasses an outdoor Community Closer. Items are placed on racks, shelves or in bins as if they're in a closet. Each week, the culmination of all the donations received are placed in the closet. "We appreciate it if donations are given to us in an organized way, even placed on hangers," Gambino explains. "That way, we're able to take the donations and

put them out right away." **MORE INFO** 225 Broadway, Huntington Station; call to donate, 631-351-6996; [helpinghandsrescuemission.org](http://helpinghandsrescuemission.org)

**BOOKS, TOYS AND MORE: ANGELS OF LONG ISLAND**

This center's highlight is its outreach department. Founder Debbie Loesch explains, "If there's a house fire and families have lost everything, or a domestic violence situation, or a school social worker is aware of a child who isn't dressed weather-appropriately, we are contacted. We make sure our donations are brought to those children and their families." Everyone will receive clothing in their correct sizes, as well as books, toys, and anything else the family needs.

Two drive-thru locations accept donations. Staff members help donors remove items from their cars. **MORE INFO** 13 Herkimer St., Mastic; 360-23 E. Main St., East Patchogue; 631-803-6775; [angelsoflongisland.com](http://angelsoflongisland.com)

**DIAPERS AND HOUSEWARES: THE INN**

There is a free clothing and houseware boutique within this donation center where guests in need can make an appointment and choose useful items. A limited number of books are also accepted. Dana Lopez, director of marketing and communications, says, "For babies through teens, we welcome new or gently used clothing. Socks and underwear must be new. We ask for only seasonal clothing, so as soon as people need them, we can give them out immediately."

A diaper section is in the boutique area. Wipes and disposable diapers in all sizes are always needed, especially diapers size 4 and up.

Lopez mentioned two typical ways to donate diapers: When parents have kids who have outgrown a diaper size but still have new ones left in sealed packages, they can donate them. Other times, when parents order for their babies, they order an extra pack and donate it. **MORE INFO** Donations accepted at: Mary Brennan INN, 100 Madison Ave., Hempstead; 516-486-6242; [theinn.org](http://theinn.org)

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