

New OSKA shop in Montclair made massive holiday contribution

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The clothing donations are mostly secondhand. Some donations are new kids clothes, and other items are gently used garments — standard contributions at the Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church clothing ministry.

After more than 500 pieces of new European women's designer clothing were donated to Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church's clothing ministry, church members Deacon Ruthie Greene, left, Kelly Richardson, seated, and Arlene McDuffie visit as Pastor Elizabeth Campbell arrives at the OSKA Montclair shop on Church Street and meets the sales associate, Chanti Hauptmann, right.

Church Pastor Elizabeth Campbell was not expecting a high-end donation this past Christmas.

OSKA, a German-based women's garment shop that opened a store in [Montclair](#) at the end of October, during the holiday donated more than 500 designer pieces to the ministry.

Because many of the garments are sophisticated and chic, Campbell said she is hopeful they will go to people who need clothes for job interviews and similar professional needs.

"Upscale, trendy clothes will help people to feel good and to look good," Campbell said.

The donation had such an impact that it has inspired the church to explore the possibility of holding workshops for individuals who are unemployed, said Campbell, who noted the idea is on the church's working agenda.

"There are a lot of people who are unemployed and are going around looking for jobs ... and perhaps they don't have the things they would like to have," she noted. "Maybe they are spending their last dollar trying to buy clothing and look good while applying for a job.

"This is a tremendous blessing and a tremendous Christmas gift, given to us the day before Christmas. It is extremely appreciated," Campbell said.

"People are hurting today, and looking nice helps."

Brian Vanderhoof, store manager for the New York and [Montclair](#) OSKA stores, and sales agent for the wholesale line in Canada and the United States' East Coast, said that, during the shop's move to Church Street, there was ample apparel — too much for the new location to accommodate.

"We had a bunch of clothes we wanted to donate," Vanderhoof told The Times. "It was great stuff that had no home, back stock, from a couple seasons prior, and we literally ran out of room to be able to store it."

The store was put in touch with 4th Ward Councilwoman Renée Baskerville, who then reached out to Campbell, Vanderhoof said.

"When the OSKA folks mentioned that they needed to purge some of their previous seasons' pieces ... we immediately thought how perfect it would be to find someone within our own community who could most benefit from such a donation," Rennie Ackerman Grabowsky, wife of the store's landlord, Dick Grabowsky, stated in an email to The Times.

"I called Renee immediately, knowing that she would know exactly the right organization," Ackerman Grabowsky stated. "OSKA is brand new to the area ... And what an ideal way to introduce themselves to the neighborhood."

Rising Mt. Zion Church immediately came to mind, observed Baskerville, due to its clothing ministry.

A team of people from the Monroe Place church picked up the items, Vanderhoof said. It was a coincidence that the donation took place on Christmas Eve, he said.

"That was the timing. It was a special day," he said. "It was kind of magical."

According to Baskerville, "It was a holiday miracle."

All of the pieces are of the OSKA designer brand, noted Vanderhoof, and are a range of summer and fall items, including trousers, jackets, shirts, T-shirts, belts and bags.

It was not a typical church donation: The donated items ranged from \$100 T-shirts, to \$200 tops and blouses, to \$350 trousers, Vanderhoof said.

OSKA was established in the late 1990s, and is based in Munich, Germany. Of its 22 retail stores all over the world, [Montclair](#) is the newest shop in the United States, he said. There's a New York shop on Columbus Avenue in the Upper West Side, and there are two other locations in California, he said.

"It was good fortune that it all came together," Vanderhoof said. "We're really fortunate that we have made some wonderful contacts here.

"I'm grateful we were put in touch with some who really needed it and also really appreciated it. Every experience I've had so far in this town has been wonderful."

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Source: http://www.northjersey.com/news/138544764_Designer_donation.html?page=all