



Shown are Lea Heidman and Joe Matuscak of the drug abuse treatment nonprofit group The LCADA Way. Heidman, a board

What happens after someone completes a treatment program for substance abuse? That was on Lea Heidman's mind when she had a conversation with Thea Biddinger.

The two Brunswick women met through a connection with The LCADA Way, a nonprofit Lorain-based treatment center that has opened facilities in Medina and Wadsworth. In



WINTER
COLLECTION
SALES EVENT

ENDS FEB 28

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member, and Matuscak, director of marketing, development and communication, were sorting and tallying donations at the Medina location, 740 E. Washington St. ASHLEY FOX / GAZETTE

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March 2015, Heidman's 21-year-old daughter, Alyssa Apostolakis, died of a heroin overdose.

Biddinger knew of someone who she said is "doing better," and coming out of treatment.

Thinking about people who might be in need upon leaving a program, Biddinger said the idea was created for Project: You Matter.

Heidman helped get the program going as a LCADA Way board member.

Bags containing toiletries, first aid and hygiene products, a free meal voucher from McDonald's, coffee cups, hats, nonperishable food and other miscellaneous items are being distributed to those exiting programs.

They also are being made available to police and EMS units and some will be at hospitals in the area.

In Medina, Lorain, Summit and Cuyahoga counties, 100 bags per county will be available.

All are expected to be given away by Dec. 31, said Joe Matuscak, director of marketing, development and communication for The LCADA Way. Items that are unopened and new are needed, Matuscak said, including:

- socks

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- T-shirts
- hand sanitizers
- baby wipes
- tissues

Donations may be taken to The LCADA Way office at 740 E. Washington St., Suite E4, Medina, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m weekdays. The office will be closed Monday and Jan. 2. EMS officials are invited to call Matuscak at (440) 989-4900 to receive supplies.

Heidman and Matuscak said they are hopeful Project: You Matter will become a holiday tradition.

Contact reporter Ashley Fox at (330) 721-4048 or afox@medina-gazette.com.

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