

The photo resource for students, educators and institutions. Click here for more info!



CALUMET
PHOTO.COM

College Classifieds

Every state, every college.
Indexed for search engines.
Quality listings.

Any moron can do free.
We do results.

Exchanging cruelty for kindness Local clothing shop donates used fur coats to provide comfort for orphaned animals

By Brett Marlow [Print](#)
[Send an Email to Brett Marlow](#)
Assistant A&E Editor



The Humane Society

Two 2-week-old gray foxes snuggle together in fur donated by The Humane Society of the United States. Nearly 2,000 furs were donated last year to Buffalo Exchange, a recycled clothing store, during the Coats for Critters campaign by The HSUS.

Orphaned and injured wildlife in Illinois and around the country are sleeping better, thanks to a local recycled clothing shop and The Humane Society for the United States' Coats for Critters campaign.

Buffalo Exchange, a clothing shop that prides itself of being environmentally conscious by selling used clothing, has two locations in the Chicago area; one in Lakeview, 2875 N. Broadway St. and one in Wicker Park, 1478 N. Milwaukee Ave. Buffalo Exchange stores across the country have teamed up with The HSUS for a national campaign called Coats for Critters. The stores collect real fur clothing like coats, shawls and hats for local licensed wildlife rehabilitation centers.

The used furs gathered from the Chicago Buffalo Exchange locations will be sent to a wildlife rehabilitator in Watson, Ill., who will use the furs to comfort orphaned and injured wildlife and nurse them back to health, said Andrea Cimino, campaign manager for The HSUS' Wildlife Department.

The campaign aims to help wildlife rehabilitators and to bring public awareness to the cruelty behind fur.

Cimino said people who might not feel right about still wearing fur could donate to the program instead of throwing it away, which would still make a difference to wildlife animals.

“If we can get more people to stop wearing their fur and people put it to a good use, the less people wearing fur the better in our opinion,” Cimino said.

When wildlife rehabilitators receive the furs, they cut the furs depending on the size of whatever animals they have at their center, Cimino said. The donated used furs are used as bedding where the animals will snuggle with it. Cimino said it reduces stress and adds comfort to the orphaned animals, almost acting as a surrogate mother.

“When [orphaned animals] come in, they’re usually high-stressed because their mother has been killed or whatever. The fur sort of comforts them and helps them to calm down,” Cimino said.

The ongoing campaign partnered up with Buffalo Exchange in 2006 after a Humane Society member mentioned the program to an employee of one of Buffalo Exchange’s stores, Cimino said.

The donations and collections started Nov. 1 at Buffalo Exchanges across the country and runs until Earth Day, April 22. Since the program wrapped up last year, Buffalo Exchange has collected just shy of 2,000 used furs, said Michelle Livingston, marketing director for Buffalo Exchange.

Cimino said most of the animals the furs go toward are rabbits, squirrels, foxes and raccoons who have been orphaned.

“Most of them are animals that have been abandoned, or their mothers were hit by a car and somebody brought in the cubs to a wildlife rehabilitator,” Cimino said.

Livingston said customers who specifically come in to donate coats should mention its for the Coats for Critters campaign. The used furs are a straight donation and their condition doesn’t matter.

Ryan Hurling, a college campaign coordinator for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said he likes the idea people are donating the coats to a cause instead of throwing them away.

“Often times we’ve found that especially when you donate a lot of these things to wildlife rehabilitation centers and areas where animals are in dire need of assistance, [the animals] can often find a lot of comfort in these warm furs to sleep on and rest on,” Hurling said. “Even at local humane societies, they’ve been found as good form of bedding.”

Valerie Chalcraft, who holds a doctorate in experimental psychology, also runs an animal behaviorist consulting firm, Applied Animal Behavior, 731 W. 18th. St. She said putting furs in with orphaned animals isn’t unusual. Chalcraft said she has seen it done with dogs or cats who have been taken away from their mothers.

“What we’ll do is, we’ll take a hot water bottle and wrap it in a towel, or in this case, a fur coat could work. We’ll use a wind up alarm clock that makes a ticking sound and that emulates the heartbeat. So between the heat of the hot water bottle and the ticking of the clock, which is like the heartbeat and the fur, it could

closely approximate a mother,” Chalcraft said.

Chalcraft said the furs provide warmth and for animals that might be nursing, fur is a better material for animals to dig their paws and claws into rather than a hard surface, a typical behavior baby animals do to their mother’s stomachs.

Chalcraft said one way to teach orphaned animals skills is to teach them how to play, and according to Cimino, some of the rehabilitating animals do just that with the furs.

“If the fur coats are used for toys to emulate play, it’s going to help the orphans develop hunting skills. So if they’re reintroduced in the wild, they’ll have some hunting skills,” Chalcraft said.

Cimino said most people donate because they either have inherited a coat from a relative or purchased the coat a while ago before learning about cruelties behind the furring process.

“It really appeals to people because they recognize the animals have suffered and die for this object, and so they want to give it back to a purpose that will help animals,” Cimino said. “It does a little bit of justice. It could never make up for the cruelty, but with cause, but I think it does give people a sense of closure.”

PETA has been collecting furs since it started in 1980. Since 2001, it has collected and received more than 10,000 fur donations that the organization uses for its anti-fur demonstrations, educational purposes and like the campaign with Buffalo Exchange, donations to homeless shelters and wildlife centers, Hurling said.

Cimino said since the Humane Society had such a successful run with the campaign with Buffalo Exchange locations throughout the nation last year, they decided to do it again this year.

For more information on the Coats for Critters campaign, visit BuffaloExchange.com or HSUS.org.

Copyright © 2006 The Columbia Chronicle. All rights reserved.

The Columbia Chronicle articles, photos, and graphics are the property of the Columbia Chronicle and may not be reproduced or published without written permission from the staff, editors, or faculty advisor. The Columbia Chronicle is a student produced publication of [Columbia College Chicago](http://ColumbiaCollegeChicago) and does not necessarily represent, in whole or in part, the views of [Columbia College](http://ColumbiaCollege) administrators, faculty or students. Have issues? Please download our [Web Policy](#).