

Angel Ministries spreading its wings with new showroom expansion

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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JERSEYVILLE – Angel Ministries has changed locations in an effort to be more accessible to anyone in need of assistance in Jerseyville.

Ministry Director Janice Arnold said she has moved into the old Radio Shack building, located along Highway 67, just south of the Jerseyville Wal-Mart. This new location will offer as much as triple the space of the ministry's old location on State Street in the middle of Downtown Jerseyville. While the move may take her further from the center of town, Arnold said she is confident it is a good move for her clientele, as it offers the chance to display more items to potentially help even more people.

“This is huge for us, honestly,” Arnold said. “I feel like it's a great location. I was worried about being off State Street, but everyone manages to get to Wal-Mart and we're right by the Wal-Mart.”

Arnold said the space is used to house donations, which range anywhere from clothing to kitchen utensils to large utilities – such as refrigerators and stoves. The items are placed on display for anyone in the community coming to the location and finding themselves in need. Arnold said she helps serve a variety of people with a spectrum of needs.

“Everyone is one issue away from needing help,” she said. “Some people need us for fires or disasters or starting over or first starting out. Other people use us once a month, or just whenever they need us, like a can opener broke or they need a new shirt, and that's an unexpected expense they maybe can't afford. Other people use us like we're they're Wal-Mart. It's all about need, and we try to be there for everyone who has that need.”

As of now, the new location is not open to the public. Arnold said opening day may be Wednesday, June 27. The new location will also not handle donations. All donations will be taken and processed at an additional building managed by the ministry, located at the Old Trading Post building, located on Vine Street near the corner of East Prairie.

While all of this comes as good news to Arnold, she does operate the ministry completely funded by community donations. Every item is donated, and all the money used for day-to-day operations is donated as well. Arnold said she receives around \$500 in guaranteed donations a year, but the new locations and operations will hold a hefty price tag of \$1,500 a month.

“We desperately need to get out and get more donations,” she said. “People send us increments as low as \$5 a month. We don't have to have large amounts, we just need guaranteed regular donations every month. No one here draws a salary or makes any money. No one gets paid. We just need to cover our bills. I gave up my paying job to do this full time.”

Earlier this year, Angel Ministries was involved in a controversy with Hillbillie Ranch of Otterville, which was going to donate proceeds from a weekend event to the group until it was realized by Hillbille Ranch staff that Angel Ministries did not have a 501(c)3 tax certification. Arnold said the organization still does not hold that documentation.

Arnold said that certification is less crucial since the new federal tax laws went into place. Under current law, she said people will get less specific deductions with receipts from donations to 501(c)3 charities.

More information on Angel Ministries and opportunities for donations can be found by contacting Arnold at (618) 535-9919. The former showroom will be closed, and the ministry will not be available for goods until the new location opens.