

HELPING THE HOMELESS

Groups of volunteers in Hanoi have been collecting secondhand warm clothes and donating them to homeless people living around the capital, where the weather has been especially cold this winter.

Starting on January 4, the NiỀm Tin (Belief) group -founded by Tran Quynh Anh- began handing out jumpers and coats, providing clothing to nearly 30 people on the campaign's first night.

Anh said after she noticed that many homeless vendors, shoe shiners, and carriers, were spending the cold nights at bus stops, on pavements or under bridges, she decided to act. She began collecting old warm clothes from friends and family members; washing them; and then donating them to the local homeless population.

Nguyen Thuy Linh, a NiỀm Tin member, said before receiving clothes donated by the group, many of the recipients had only been wearing very thin shirts and had to huddle together in corners in order to stay warm.

"Every time we went out to donate clothes, we wore two or more jumpers, or coats, but still felt terribly cold," Linh said.

The capital city has been facing with one of the coldest winters on record, with temperatures dropping below 10 degrees, causing primary schools to temporarily close and sparking a 20-percent increase in the number of adults requiring hospitalization for cold weather related illnesses.

Another volunteer group, Ấm (Warm), has been running a charity operation via Facebook for nearly two years.

Every Saturday night, the group goes out and donates warm clothes, food and personal items, collected mostly from its source of online supporters, to Hanoi's homeless.

The group shares the locations where homeless people can be found on its Facebook page so that others can come to help hand out donations.

Nguyen Hoang Thao, leader of the Ấm group, said not only youths, but

elderly persons, many of whom are not healthy enough to go outside in the cold nights, have been helping homeless people by donating homemade soup and rice porridge for the group to deliver.

The group also plans to come up with more significant measures designed to help the homeless.

"Warm clothes or food can only help them endure the cold for some nights, and after all, they are still homeless or even jobless. Our group is planning to help find them jobs so that they can lead better lives," said Thao.

These groups go around the city at about 11 p.m., the time homeless people tend to emerge at the locations where they sleep.

Why is the cold weather causing problems for the homeless?

How are people trying to help the homeless?

Why did Tran Quynh Anh decide to help the homeless?

What are a few different ways we can help the homeless?
