



## Ministry swaps children's clothes

By KELLY MONITZ (Staff Writer)

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Krista Arostegui stood behind a table in the vestibule of Hazleton Community Church in Hazle Township on Saturday morning, welcoming those who wanted to participate in the children's clothing swap, Clothe It Forward. The church began the swap three weeks ago to allow parents to bring in "gently worn" garments with no rips or tears and exchange them for up to 10 new items each week, she said. "The price of clothing is expensive," Arostegui said, adding that some parents can't afford to buy their children all new clothes when they outgrow their old ones. Racks of clothes and shelves of shoes fill a small room at the back of the church, where parents and children can shop for new clothes. "It doesn't have to be an even exchange," Arostegui said. "Maybe they bring in shirts, but they need pants ... they can do that." The clothing ranges from infant sizes to children's size 14/16, she said. Stock ranges from everyday clothes to school uniforms, and dress clothes to winter coats and snowsuits. The idea for the swap was born out of necessity, Arostegui said.

Parents within the church wanted to pass their children's clothes along to other parents who may be able to use them for their own children, she said. The problem was that they didn't know who to pass them on to. So Arostegui began taking the bags - even if her own children couldn't use them - and a new ministry for the church began, she said. On Saturday, she was joined by fellow church member Tiki Olsen, who came to help but found herself shopping for her children. Only she forgot to bring a bag of clothes along to exchange.

"I hope these are here next week," Olsen said, looking at a pair of shoes. The swap is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon, Arostegui said, but the church will be offering some evening hours in September. So far, the ministry has assisted five or six people a week, she said. "It's going good," Arostegui said.