

# The Capital

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## Shop, shelter are 'bosom buddies'

### A la Mode to donate gently used bras to Light House

By [ELISHA SAUERS](#) Staff Writer

An Annapolis retailer has the breast intentions.

As the economy continues to sag, A la Mode Lingerie, located at 32 West St., will help the less-fortunate in its own fashion - with bras.

During this month, A la Mode employees will accept secondhand bras from customers, and the store will then donate the bras to the Light House shelter for the homeless.

But not the dry-rotted, been-at-the-bottom-of-the-hamper-since-1989 bras. Sarah Platt, a marketing associate for the family owned business, said these donations should be of the nonperishable sort.

"We won't be giving out any ratty-looking bras," Ms. Platt said.

As incentive for customers to bring in their worn wares, A la Mode will give donors \$5 off their next bra purchase. Then the store's staff will make a special visit to the shelter to professionally fit the women for their correct bra sizes.

In doing so, Light House clients will be matched with bras of their measurements, either from the collection of donations or from the store's rack. With 28- to 44-inch bands and AA- to K-sized cups, A la Mode's inventory can fit a wide range of figures, Ms. Platt said.

"We think everybody will get something," she said, adding that the store has some styles left over from last season to donate.



Paul W. Gillespie - The Capital

Sarah Platt, a marketing associate for the lingerie boutique A la Mode, shows off the overflowing donation bin of gently used bras.

The retailer is giving back to women of Annapolis by providing needy residents at the Light House shelter with the secondhand bras and its own last-season inventory.

This is the fourth year the business has attempted the bra drive, which was an idea that originated as the owners realized many women are stowing ill-fitting bras in their dresser drawers.

To promote proper bra-fitting, the store began asking customers in 2005 to lift their spirits and separate themselves from the wrong bras. The company prides itself on bra-fitting, stating on its Web site that, "Our entire sales staff is professionally certified bra fitters."

Marilyn Baker, development director for the Light House, said currently the shelter is housing about a dozen adult women. Many of the clients who seek help at the shelter are overweight, she said, and may require custom sizes that could otherwise be relatively expensive for them.

"It is of concern to have proper undergarments for job interviews and for health and comfort," Ms. Baker said.

A la Mode staff said Jan. 31 is the last day to get bra donations in under the wire.