

A charity with sole

Celebs donate old shoes in annual drive to help out the needy

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Toronto Sun

Ten years ago shoe store owner Ron White ran errands around Yonge St. and Eglinton Ave.

Between destinations he glanced at people's shoes, something he said he has done often since entering the shoe business.

One pair of shoes he saw belonged to a homeless man leaning against a building. The man's toes poked out of his shoes and White watched as a snowflake drifted down,

landing on the tip of a toe. Suddenly White was inspired.

When people buy new shoes they often leave behind their old ones, White said. Not willing to toss them in the garbage, White kept them in his store's back room. Looking at the snowflake crowned toe and thinking about his stock of discarded shoes, White decided to use the stockpile to start a shoe drive for needy people.

Yesterday the Ron White

Foot Shoppe shoe drive's 10th annual campaign began. It runs until Feb. 4 and he hopes to get another 1,500 pairs, noting most people have unwanted shoes in their closets. Over the past decade, his six GTA stores have collected more than 12,000 pairs of shoes.



CARTER
Gave slip-ons

"Whatever we collect is never enough ... all shoe stores should do this."

Staff clean and sort the shoes and every two days

they're shipped to shelters like the Halton Women's Place and Woodgreen Red Door Family Shelter.

To help gain public support, White collects autographed shoes from celebrities. This year he added Backstreet Boy Nick Carter's black slip-on shoe and Donovan Bailey's track shoe.

Yesterday, CTV's Rod Black offered the burgundy loafers he wore at the 1994 Olympics, noting that on the way to the store, he walked past a homeless man who had bare feet.



FRED THORP/ILL/SUN

CTV's Rod Black donates the pair of shoes he wore to the Olympics to the annual Ron White Foot Shoppe shoe drive.