

LIFE • fashion

Thursday, December 27, 2001 Section J thestar.com

The shoe must go on

Making New Year's resolutions often involves bettering ourselves. This year why not resolve to make things better for others. Life writer *Jeane Beker* provides some fashion-centred suggestions on page J4 and J5

Beker

BEST FOOT FORWARD: Canadian celebrities have donated old shoes to raise awareness of the Foot Shoppe's annual lightly-used shoe drive. They include, from left, Mike Bullard, Andrea Martin, Kurt Browning, Dini Petty and (in main picture) Jeane Beker. These shoes and more are on display in the stores.

Resolve to help others make a fashion statement

BY APARITA BHANDARI
LIFE WRITER

Jeanne Beker did it. So did Mike Bulard, Lou Diamond Phillips, Andrea Martin, Dini Petty, Anne Mroczkowski, Gord Martineau and Mark Tewksbury.

They have all donated their old shoes to kick off The Foot Shoppe's 6th annual shoe drive. And Ron White, president and owner of The Foot Shoppe, wants the public to follow in those famous footsteps.

"We are asking for gently worn winter stuff," says White. "Not strappy sandals nobody will wear."

His goal is quality shoes, not quantity. He would rather collect half the shoes he collected last year, provided they are in good shape.

"We screen the shoes," he says. "I don't want to sound picky, but what good are shoes that should be thrown out?"

The idea of a shoe drive came to White one chilly November evening when he saw a homeless man on the street with "his toes ripped out of his shoes." He started to collect all the shoes his customers would abandon in his "comfort shoes" store and distributed them to the needy. Spurred on by the success, he started mailing his top clients.

"People just started bringing things in," says White. "I hooked up with lots of shelters. This year, we're donating to Red Door, Chill Out and Halston's Women Place."

And to make the shoe drives "more fun," he got some celebrities to pitch in.

"I'll pretty much call anyone," laughs White. "So I called Shirley Solomon who sent her shoes. One day, I heard Lou Diamond Phillips was in town, so I just called him up. Sure enough, he sent his shoes."

The celebrity twist helped.

Today, five-foot high posters on the store windows and displays of celebrity shoes inside remind clients the shoe drive is rolling round. The current campaign starts Jan. 7 and continues until Jan. 23.

"People don't really start digging into their closets until winter sets in," says White. "When they do, they can come in-

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to the store, sip some hot chocolate and brandy and leave their shoes."

Shoes with some kick in them can be dropped into donation boxes at any of The Foot Shoppe locations: 2465 Yonge St., Toronto, 337 Lakeshore Road East, Oakville, and Mephisto by The Foot Shoppe in the Manulife Centre at Bay and Bloor Sts.