



Political signs may be helping the homeless

By Anastasiya Bolton

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BROOMFIELD - Carlene Bratach's home, at least her living room, slightly resembles political campaign headquarters. But after a closer look, it's tough to figure out who she is trying to promote.

The banners, crammed in boxes and on the floor, have both Democratic and Republican names on them.

Bratach is using the banners for a very apolitical purpose, without any agenda, she says.

"I'm calling them tarps, especially the political banners, I'm calling them political quilts," said Bratach, "No matter what, they're for the same purpose, to help keep people warm and not wet."

Bratach plans to make over 150 tarps and donate them to St. Francis Center in Denver, an organization that works with homeless men and women in the Denver area.

"We look forward to seeing the results of her hard work," said Andrew Spinks, the Center's development director, "St. Francis Center is always interested in connecting people who care with people who are in need."

Bratach came up with this idea after trying to use Starbucks coffee bags to make Halloween costumes for her two boys.

But the material was too crunchy and the stay-at-home mom decided to start making tarps.

It was several days before the election and while she was driving, Bratach noticed the political signs and thought they might work too.

"I thought, 'Oh my God, all this stuff is going to go to the landfill.' And then I thought, 'I wonder if I could sew on those.'"

She got some signs from neighbors and most from Altogether Recycling in Denver.

"It's really cool," said Brent Hildebrand, the company's vice president of recycling. "It's a McCain-Palin sign sewed onto an Obama sign and it looks like a plastic blanket, it's pretty neat."

"We would've shipped them off to market, to actually be recycled into something else, made into something else," said Hildebrand.

Bratach is contributing to those efforts.

"If it's able to help them get through a bad night, cold night, it will make me feel better that I helped someone from that," she said. "Hopefully all the candidates would be glad that their advertising is being used to a good purpose."