

## Midlands Teen Giving the Gift of Warmth this Winter

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Kenan Sakarcian

Columbia, SC (WLTX)- While many high school students



are off enjoying their winter break, one Spring Valley student is busy thinking of ways to help the city's homeless.

Kenan Sakarcian, a senior, is on a mission to collect 150 sleeping bags in a campaign called "Got Warmth?"

"My plan is that distributing the sleeping bags will aid the human condition and help these people survive," Sakarcian said.

Sakarcian was selected to participate in Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders program for commitment to community involvement and environmental causes.

"Nine homeless people died last year due to exposure and I just wanted something concrete that

would have an **impact** directly to humans and saving their lives."

Sakarcian has called on local **businesses**, like the Backpacker, to help out.

"I think what appealed to us is that he's directly going out and giving them to these men and women at the park," said Courtney Love Gowans.

"It's cold out here," said Bobby J. Walters, who has called a Finlay Park bench his "home" for many years.

"If you talk about giving somebody a sleeping bag. You know how much warmth that brings," he said. "It's a blessing. It's a blessing."

Sakarcian's project deadline isn't until April, but he is determined to reach that 150 mark very soon. He said as temperatures in Columbia continue to drop, the need for the sleeping bags goes up.

"It's my obligation as a person who's more fortunate than others to help those that are less fortunate and so I'm very grateful for what I have and I'm trying to give back to my community."

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