Jackson's Annual Walk for Warmth attracts more than 250 walkers to raise awareness

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Participants in Friday's annual Walk for Warmth stand in front of the entrance to Consumers Energy's headquarters in downtown Jackson. The walk raises money and awareness for those who need help keeping their homes warm.

JACKSON — Friday's snowfall was a chilly reminder that Michigan winters can be tough — especially for those who struggle to pay their heating bills.To raise funds and awareness about that issue the Community Action Agency in Jackson hosted its annual Walk for Warmth of Friday, drawing more than 255 Consumers Energy employees, Community Action Agency employees and others out to participate. "With the snow falling today and the cold temperatures we are experiencing, today is a clear representation of why people need heat and why we should donate to this great cause," said Pat Norkey, Consumers Energy supply chain manager.

It wasn't immediately known how much was raised; a final tally should be ready early next week. "We are doing what we can to raise consciousness of the community that we need to band together to support one another," said Marcia Kreucher, CEO of the Community Action Agency. "We all know our economy is not great and we need to do what we can to give resources to those who need it." Kim Wilson, an attorney for Consumers Energy, said she was proud to help her community members. "I can help raise awareness for the less fortunate, and hope that others will follow suit," Wilson said.

Jessie Murray, CAA spokesperson, was excited about the community's generosity. "So many people donate in varying ways, some donate a dollar when they go to McDonald's, some just drop off money to the agency and some in Hillsdale will round their gas bill up to the next whole dollar and donate in that way,"Murray said. "The counties we serve always show up in large numbers to support others around them."