

(caption for photo A, the interior of the Loan Closet):

A wide variety of medical equipment can now be stored in one convenient location in the Livonia Rotary's new 20' x 40' building.

(caption for photo B, photo of two people shaking hands):

Livonia Rotary Club President Steve Gerould (left) congratulates fellow Rotarian Cal Lathan who has served as Loan Closet manager for over 20 years.

(caption for photo C, Photo of the Loan Closet under construction):

The new Loan Closet building under construction during the fall of 2025. One wall of the structure was an outer wall of one of the Village's DPW buildings.

(Headline):

Livonia Rotary Dedicates New Medical Loan Closet

By John Connelly

On Monday, June 15th, the Livonia Rotary Club formally dedicated its new, medical-equipment Loan Closet building. It is conveniently located in the village of Livonia, on the Village's DPW property on Commercial Street.

Once this new storage facility was completed in January 2026, the club no longer needed the storage units they had been renting in Lakeville and Livonia Center for decades. "Having all our medical supplies in one central location, right in the middle of the Village of Livonia, is so convenient for everyone who needs to borrow medical supplies," says long-time Rotarian Cal Lathan, who has run the club's Loan Closet program for over 20 years. "It is also much more convenient for the club members who maintain the inventory and see that the equipment is loaned out and returned efficiently," Lathan added.

The idea of having a single, centrally located Loan Closet to replace the rented storage units was brought up at a Rotary club meeting back in late

2024. An ad hoc committee, made up of several club members, began setting the space requirements that would have to be met for all the supplies to fit in a single storeroom. They also searched for a location that would be at no cost (or low cost) to the club.

After coordinating early on with Livonia Town Supervisor Eric Gott and village mayor Chris Genthner, both Rotarians, it was determined that a 20 ft. x 40 ft. structure could be attached to an existing building on village property behind the Village Office and adjacent to the DPW cold-storage building.

A concrete pad was laid at this location in August 2025, thus establishing the Loan Closet's footprint. Over the next several weeks, all-volunteer work crews that included Rotarians Dan Coon, Don Simpson, Steve Gerould, Chris Hoffmann, Tim Wahl, Jake Bills, Jeremy Kosakowski, Dan Simpson, John DiVincenzo, and others put their varied skills to work and turned the concept into a reality.

Once the framing, siding, and roofing were completed, the interior work began. Shelving and partitions were built and, soon after, the wide range of medical supplies were brought over from the rented storage units.

For a little history, the loaning out of medical equipment — the Livonia Rotary Club's most successful and longest-lasting service project — was started some 84 years ago. What is known today as the Loan Closet was called a "loan cupboard" back in 1942.

The whole idea was the brainchild of Tracy C. Swan, MD, the club's president at that time. In an article tracing the history of Livonia Rotary, the late Dick Emery wrote that much of the credit for making the medical-equipment loan program so successful through the 1960s and '70s is owed to then Town Supervisor and Livonia Rotarian Alson ("Al") Drowne.

Right from its earliest days, the "cupboard" loaned out hospital beds, wheelchairs, crutches, commodes, and much more, all at no cost to those in the community who needed such equipment. Back then the medical supplies were stored at Livonia's Town Hall. When that space was no longer adequate, the club began renting space at local storage facilities.

For more than eight decades, Livonia Rotary has offered the community access to a free, loaned medical equipment. “Now that the new Loan Closet is up and running in the village on Commercial Street,” Cal Lathan said, “we invite those in the greater Livonia community to contact us whenever the need for medical equipment may arise.”

Mike Dougherty, one of the Loan Closet managers, added, “We also want to let those in the community know that we gratefully accept used medical equipment to add to our inventory.” For more information on borrowing or donating medical equipment, contact Mike at (585) 281-1154 and leave a message.