



Restoring New Life to Items

What can you do with an old door knob? That windowpane? A coat of arms? If you don't have a use for them, you can always donate to the Habitat ReStore in Bellefonte that supports Habitat for Humanity of Greater Centre County. Or if you know exactly what you can do with those and other items, you can likely find some "gems" at ReStore that would be perfect for your latest do-it-yourself project. ReStore manager Stephanie Clevenger shares the value ReStore has for customers and for the community.

T&G: Are you seeing more people coming through the store over the last year or two? Do you attribute that to anything?

Clevenger: I would say that our increase in customers has not been over the last two years but gradually over the eight years we have been taking donations and raising money for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Centre County. The more folks who have a positive experience shop-

ping, donating, or volunteering at the ReStore, the more successful we are, and that, along with our mission to support Habitat in building homes with families while simultaneously reducing land-fill waste, is how we have done well over the years.

T&G: Do you have some examples of some hidden "gems" people have found at the store?

Clevenger: It depends on the treasure hunter: Are they searching for four legs for their coffee table, a replacement toilet lid or chandelier for their dining room with a price tag that is shockingly low? What I consider a "gem," a 100-year-old unused solid walnut door, an unused stainless steel refrigerator, or one-of-a-kind handmade Christmas ornaments vary from even our Habitat staff. Their amazing finds are lifetime warranty wrenches, a 1930s' metal toolbox, and a \$10 utility tub, amongst other prizes. Honestly, every day I am intrigued by what we have donated — anything from granite countertops and brass drawer pulls to three replica aluminum cast King George II coats of arms. You never know what you will unearth, and all the proceeds go to a great cause, making

shopping a feel-good experience.

T&G: Are there perception battles you still fight being a store that resells items or have they gone away?

Clevenger: I think more and more people want to feel good about their purchases or donations, and being a year-round fundraiser for Habitat GCC that has built 57 homes in our area, our ReStore people can feel good about being a part of that no matter how small the donation or purchase. As a nonprofit we are given some flexibility, our stock changes daily because we get donations Tuesday through Saturday from homeowners, businesses, and contractors, so what you are looking for or not looking for might or might not be here. But we have a small friendly knowledgeable staff and loyal volunteers that help out our donors and customers however they can.

T&G: What do you think are going to be the hot items this spring and summer that people are going to be really looking for?

Clevenger: There are the needs of spring right now, like building ponds, putting up fences, and replacing windows. And when repairs are made we receive the donations of the building materials that were not used or were replaced. Also jobs like laying tile for walkways, potting plants, or repairing decks,

and we have the supplies for these projects and many others. What have been popular lately are materials for chicken coops. Usually this involves some ingenuity and money savvy on a customer's part. I have seen folks take windowpanes or an old TV cabinet and turn them into pleasant homes for their chickens.

T&G: Have you noticed any other trends of what people want when they come to the store?

Clevenger: With the boom in DIY projects on TV, blogs, sites like Pinterest, which we have a board on, and our bulletin board of customer creations and ReStore Restyles, many of our shoppers are inspired to repurpose items to give them a new functional twist. Doors, windows, and light fixtures have been very popular. Doors you can turn into desktops, side tables, entry coat racks, and more. Windows are made into planters, jewelry displays, chalkboards, and picture frames, coasters made of tile, and light fixtures are given new life with a coat of electric red paint. Another trend is turning anything into a coat or towel hanger: door handles, old hammers, even faucets. And because our stock is priced well below retail, these projects are economical and have come with a story — that Habitat was benefited by their purchase. **T&G**

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