



ReStore Helps Build Homes and a Sense of Community

There are many good things volunteers help provide for people such as food to eat, clothes to wear, and sometimes even a place to stay. Habitat for Humanity is known for helping qualified, low-income families build their own affordable homes, but what you may not know is that they also provide a new way to reuse, rebuild, and recycle. It's called the ReStore.

Every Thursday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. you can stop by and look for furniture, kitchen appliances, paint, and even the occasional hot tub.

"It's full of surprises. There's no planned inventory so every truck that pulls up is an adventure," said store manager Brett Gemlich.

The ReStore accepts donations of new and used materials from individuals, manufacturers and contractors. Items are either sold in the store to people who are looking to do their own home improvements on a budget, or they are used on the houses that Habitat for Humanity builds.

"I really believe in the ReStore," says volunteer cashier Getha Tidrick. "We do a good business here and everything we do goes back to the community. Stuff that people would take to the dump, we're able to resell and reuse."

As proceeds from the store go toward helping fund Habitat projects, most of the people who work there are volunteers.

"It gives me a bit of satisfaction knowing I'm making a difference in the community," said Carlos Wasilansky who started helping out at the ReStore as a way to assess and improve his skills while job hunting.

"It was something constructive to do with my time. I've learned how to use a cash register and how to work in retail," said Wasilansky who hopes to continue participating with ReStore even after he finds employment.

More than one volunteer commented on how the atmosphere at the ReStore is why they continue to offer their time.

"It's such a nice place to work. We enjoy our customers and the regulars who come in once a week," said Tidrick, a retired school teacher who has worked with the ReStore for over a year as a way to stay involved with the community.

“One lady who came in was having a hard time fixing her bathroom and was told that her wall and plumbing would have to be redone. She brought in a picture of the type of faucets she needed and because of home repairs that my husband and I had made on our own bathroom, I was able to tell her that I thought we had the right type of faucet for her and how to install it. She said I saved her a couple hundred dollars,” said Tidrick.

This sense of community, a desire to give something back and a good old fashioned work ethic are what make ReStore volunteers great.

“They’re motivated when they come in the door. They don’t have to be the one putting the nail in the wall to recognize that they’re doing some good,” said Gemlich.

With the success of the Shelton ReStore, Habitat for Humanity has plans to open a Belfair location in the near future. Anyone looking to contribute in the North Mason area can contact Gemlich at 360-426-2198 for more information.

To help Habitat for Humanity you can become a donor, organize a drive in your neighborhood, volunteer in the ReStore, on their board, or be a volunteer leader. For specific volunteer opportunities with Habitat for Humanity, contact the Volunteer Center of Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties at 360-426-3405 or visit us at www.volunteer.ws.