

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore gives a second life to home improvement items

Anyone who is moving out or into a home is familiar with having either too much stuff or not enough. The Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark ReStore is the perfect solution.

"For people who don't know what a ReStore is, I think it's a lost opportunity in areas that are not served," said Rosa Carvajal, manager for the Fairfield location serving Essex, Hudson and Union counties for Greater Newark Habitat for Humanity.

Open since March, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore inventory of items differs from thrift shops by focusing on gently used donated household home improvement needs from furniture to tiles to hardware. There also are décor, appliances, cabinetry and light fixtures that once inhabited a home but found their way to this large self-service warehouse to occupy yet another abode — maybe yours. The great advantage to shopping here is that there's no wait time on a desired piece typically ordered through a retailer and the prices are a fraction of the cost if new.

"People de-clutter and their furniture goes to new families who appreciate it," said Jane Urry, who handles public relations and marketing communications for the store, "and the proceeds fund affordable housing. It's a win-win-win."

The 18,000-square-foot facility houses only items that are in excellent condition for do-it-yourself homeowner projects. Sales of these pre-owned items are then directed toward helping build, rehabilitate or repair homes in the community.

For those choosing to donate goods to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore rather than setting up a garage sale or hiring a hauling service, you can schedule a date to have volunteers pick up items for free within a couple of weeks. Photos of items are requested first using a form on the Habitat for Humanity of Greater New-



Art that once brightened the corridors and walls of homes throughout the area can find new life at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore.

ark's ReStore website. For even quicker pickups, the www.resupplyme.com guys will stop by within 48 hours, and even disassemble most items, for a reasonable fee — which supports their career skills training program for veterans.

For those who subscribe to the three R's of waste management — reduce, recycle, reuse — giving items to a nonprofit as a philanthropic gesture makes sense for the environment and the community.

For a homeowner like Pat, she couldn't be more pleased with the experience she had with the Fairfield ReStore. She opted to take the benefactor route when downsizing from the West Essex home she has lived in for 37 years instead of selling her household furniture and dealing with strangers walking through her home during an estate sale. Plus, now she can be assured that none of her possessions end up in a landfill and will possibly help someone who is looking for just the right thing to complete their home.

"I was happy to find them and not see my furniture destroyed," Pat said about choosing to use the free pickup option. "Just donate it and let somebody else enjoy it."

"It's a great way for a family to ensure that their furniture goes to another family who will make memories of their own with it," Urry said. "It's a terrific county resource."

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore volunteers help merchandise the items into appealing displays, clean and sanitize the donations, prep, assemble and even upcycle some pieces using the recycled RECOLOR paint sold in the store. Eventually, Car-



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vajal plans to also introduce craft workshops led by experienced volunteers.

"I love this store. I really do love their mission," said Carvajal about her nonprofit home builder employer. "I want it to be a success."

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark's ReStore is located at 445 Route 46 in Fairfield and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. To donate or volunteer, visit: www.habitatnewark.org/restore

— Debra Stevko Miller