

Creative Reuse Center: The Idea Store

125 Lincoln Square, Urbana, IL

www.the-idea-store.org

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What is “creative reuse?”

The process of applying a thoughtful perspective, innovation, and a bit of elbow grease to materials that might be considered of little or no value, resulting in unexpected artworks, crafts, and functional items.



The Idea Store's Mission Statement

2010: **The I.D.E.A. Store** simultaneously supports and advances education, the arts, and natural resource conservation in our community while generating revenue for the Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation.

2019: **The Idea Store** is a nonprofit organization that fosters creativity, education, environmental stewardship, and community through reuse.

** Everything in the store has been donated by individuals, businesses, other non-profit organizations, and industries.

** Many items and materials might otherwise have been recycled or sent to area landfills.



- Donators
- Accumulators
- Shoppers
- Donors
- Volunteers
- Other non-profit organizations

Accepted Items



Unconventional

/ Commercial Displays



Staff and volunteer roles

- Receivers
- Recycler/Hauler
- Sorters
- Stockers
- Cashiers
- Educators
- Special sales organizers
- ED/Manager
- Board of Directors



Environmental Stewardship

- Fill a local niche
- Materials diversion from the waste stream
- Daily reducing, reusing and recycling
- Building partnerships



Challenges

- Sheer volume of donations
- Continued growth,
resulting expenses
- Receipt of true waste
- Maintaining staffing
- Stabilizing after each expansion



Great outcomes!

- Generosity
- Community reuse sector support and cooperation
- Even more dedicated supporters
- Timing
- Increased accessibility

So, how did we get here?

Successful Start-up Process

- See and confirm a need
- Recognize the potential
- Research
- Seek guidance from a successful role model
- Community buy-in and collaboration
- Committed, excited volunteers

Great Giveaway Events



Testing, testing....



They LOVED this!

Going Public

- Trial events
- Identify mentors, supporters
- Consult business pros
- Find a partner if you have to
- Educate target audience
- Start small, scale up



Our new home: Lincoln Square Mall, Urbana



Growth: Physical space

- Opened September 30, 2010 after 4 years of preparation 2,000 sq ft
- 2 expansions: in 2011, warehouse, classroom, storage 5,000 sq ft
in 2016, “FoundRe” classroom/event 800 sq ft



2018-19

Move to Urbana: 8,700 square feet

Flipped storage:store percentage

Growth: Volunteers & Paid Staff

- Opening 2010
20 volunteers + 2 paid staff
- In 2018, pre-move
60 volunteers + 7 paid staff
- In 2019, new location
60 volunteers + 10 paid staff
more group helpers: 30 per week



Volunteer Stewards and Generalists



“Jewelry Jackpot”

November 7-10

Spring & Fall,
our largest fundraisers,
volunteer-powered!



Fiscal Growth



- In first five years, earned thousands of dollars for CUSF
- “It’s My Idea” grants to CU teachers
- As expected, success led to increased staff and space costs
...transition...
- Gross sales have increased 31% over September 2018
- Goal is \$244,000 gross sales in 2019

Other creative reuse center models

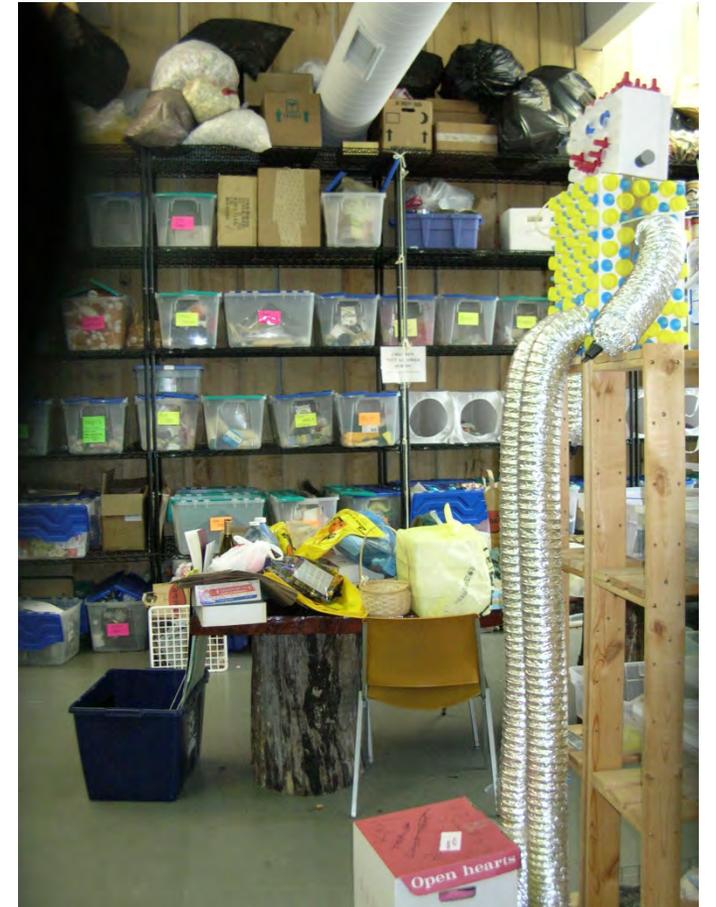
- Represent their missions
- Reflect their communities' economic sectors and demographics
- Independent, SCRAP chain model, or municipal
- Members only, open to teachers only, open to all
- Free materials, sold by piece or by the pound

- Northampton, Mass.
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/751/Solid-Waste>

- Hammond, Indiana ReUz Station
- www.lcswmd.com/i-want-to/what-is-the-reuz-room/

ReUz Station in Hammond, IN

Scrap Exchange, Durham, NC



Work and grow together

- Reduce emissions from incinerators
- Reduce methane emissions from landfills
- Increase storage of carbon in trees
- Reduce emissions from energy consumption

“Go TEAM!”

For more information: www.the-idea-store.org