

A Project of

*Florida ReCYcled*

## **“FURNITURE EXCHANGE AND REVAMP”**

### **Shuman Juvenile Detention Center Community Service Project**

**In 2016 Allegheny County Shuman Juvenile Detention Center partnered with Habitat for Humanity / Restore: The National Council on Jewish Women / Thriftique; St. Vincent de Paul Society / Sharpsburg Store and Construction Junction in Point Breeze to advocate the importance of art in our lives and communities in a first of its kind “Furniture Exchange and Revamp Community Service Project”. Designed and operated by Gerry Florida of Florida Recycled, Ms. Florida works with the support of Allegheny County Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, The Juvenile Detention Association of Pennsylvania, The National Partnership on Juvenile Services and The County Commissioners of PA along with a growing list of generous donations of furniture and supplies from individuals, profit and nonprofit organizations**

**Distressed furniture is donated and delivered to Shuman Center where it is artfully refurbished and returned to the donor organization for sale in their resale shops. Habitat for Humanity, St Vincent De Paul, The National Council of Jewish Women and Construction Junction were the first to come on board initially donating over 25 pieces in a combined total for restoration. Shuman Center residents prepped the donated pieces through the process of sanding, priming, painting and hand decorating each item. A light coat sealant was used to preserve the furniture before it's returned to the donating organization where it was displayed and sold in their resale shop.**

**Habitat for Humanity was to first to display the furniture at their Grand Opening Sale in the spring of 2017 in their Swissvale Resale shop. The original sale value of the four distressed pieces donated by them was twenty-two dollars (\$22) ...after our residents worked their magic, the four pieces sold within the first hours of the Grand Opening to one lucky buyer for a total of two hundred and sixty dollars (\$260). In the first eight weeks of operation since the projects birth in September 2016, over twenty-five pieces of furniture had been donated with the completion of twelve artfully revamped**

pieces as of October 2016. Since then we have received over 100 pieces of furniture filtering over 45 pieces back to organizations involving over 100 residents with one hundred (100) percent of proceeds benefit the donating organization's community service projects!

We officially launched “Studio Blue at Shuman Center” in 2017 where our residents learn to the importance of recycling and work with the sole mission of giving give back to their communities in the form of art. The subliminal message we bring through this project integrates imperfection (distressed furniture) into a valuable outcome (beautiful finished peace) and parallels the lessons we teach: the integration of our imperfections for the re-creation of a seasoned, experienced and balanced human experienced with the realization the sometimes the end product is far more valuable than the original.



**Aside from non-profit resale shops, private individual donations are welcomed and revamped through our Furni-Chairs and Chosen Chair-ities Projects. Anyone wanting to donate "old" wooden furniture or specifically wooden chairs, that might otherwise end up on the roadside for pickup and inevitably in landfills, please give us a holler, as we work with generous private individuals who not only want to participate in our furniture recycling efforts but more importantly be part of recycling the generosity within ourselves. We will effortlessly pick up your old pieces and artfully revamp them for our Chosen Chair-ities Project". Upon completion, we will promise your revamped piece to a local nonprofit organization who can use it for auction at a fundraising event. Individual donations are gifted to a donor organization of choice.**

**Our "Furni-Chairs " Project involves donations of furniture and chairs from private individuals for the specific purpose of donations for the Humane Society of Western Pennsylvania through sale venues by Shuman Center. As in our other furniture revamp projects, we beautify distressed pieces and utilize the end-product for future fundraising events that specifically benefit the Humane Society of Western Pennsylvania ...the charity choice of our Shuman Center residents. As with our other projects, one hundred (100) percent of proceeds will benefit the Humane Society of Western Pennsylvania.**

**The Furniture Exchange and Revamp Project exemplifies the therapeutic and rehabilitative power of art. Schools and communities painfully withstand budget cuts that jeopardize art sustainability as government, profit and nonprofit support slowly erodes. We believe that we all can make a difference and loudly make our voices heard as we positively fill programming gaps and influence funding cuts that negatively affect our lives, education systems and culture. Aside from the obvious music, theater and visual arts are the many unsung benefits to the ways we all routinely use art in our daily lives underestimating the limitless careers where training in creative ability, problem solving, and idea generation become the springboards for a host of vocational possibilities. The residents of Shuman Center proudly serve to model an innovative community partnering exemplifying the importance of "giving back" through art as they journey through recovery in preparation to re-enter our communities as viable productive citizens and creative individuals.**

# **What Next for Our Bright Future**

## **Phase II**

In 2018 we expect to expand our program to meet the demand for community-based service programs for youth. Those who work in juvenile justice recognize that recovery cannot take place without consistency in after-care and community support. To address the need, in April of 2017 we partnered with Construction Junction in the creation of an offsite studio at Construction Junction to officially launch “Studio Blue at Construction Junction” and with that the second phase of our growth began. Working through Allegheny County Courts Juvenile Division, released residents can now be guided by the courts to serve their community service time at the offsite studio. Our future includes community service consideration for Shuman Center in house residents already involved in project.

Construction Junction has generously donated their space and trucks to accommodate a “Call for Furniture” generated by Allegheny County through a network of Allegheny County employees in the spring of 2017. Over 45 calls were received resulting in successful furniture pickups and a host of painting potential. Using two trucks and 5 strong helpers from Construction Junction, for a period of over 3 weekends the trucks traveled the city picking up furniture from Allegheny County employees. Of those 5 individual’s helpers included was Executive Director, Mike Gable of Construction Junction who donated his time to meet the donors and make this project a success.

We have been featured at 3-Rivers Arts 2017 sharing a booth with Construction Junction and will have a few of our painted pieces the 2018 Home and Garden Show. We will also be represented at “EARTHDAY 2018” in Lawrence brought to Pittsburgh by the Pennsylvania Resource Council.

## **Phase III**

We are now planning for Phase III which will involve the creation of a retail outlet on the premises of Construction Junction in April of 2018. Participating youth will organize, manage, setup, write the ground rules for a retail space

and develop a sales strategy for their painted wares. The opportunity will provide hands on experience from the manufacture to the sale of an end product not to mention the gained customer service skills needed to speak proudly of their painted pieces. Our Kickoff and Grand Retail Opening is on schedule for April 2018

## **PHASE IV**

Through the continued partnership with Construction Junction Phase IV involves “Open Studio” sessions where Studio Blue will open its doors and invite Construction Junction patrons and the general public who have interest in learning to revamp furniture to learn from our pros. Sessions will be coordinated with the assistance of our experienced youth painters and participants will pay a fee for sessions with proceeds benefiting operational costs and studio needs.

## **Phase V**

Through the continued partnership, Studio Blue at Construction Junction will open the program to youth and school groups wishing to bus youth into the Construction Junction for participating in the painting program. We have jumped line to phase five when Holy Family Institute approached us to accept youth from their alternative program to join our group sessions. Holy Family is currently busing youth weekly to participate as part of their daily school curriculum. As a result, we are operating two sessions weekly: Tuesday mornings during regular school hours and Saturday mornings. Even though we jumped the line with Holy Family, we need to receive outside funding support to stabilize the project to ensure it is properly staffed before we expand beyond Holy Family.

## **Phase VI**

As we keep expanding, Phase VI satisfies the outreach component of our mission. Once phases 1-V have are funded, stabilized and are operating successfully on a regularly scheduled basis, we will look at the mobile bus component for our outreach phase. We hope to operate a mobile unit that can travel to placement centers, schools and community centers offering recycling education through our painting services to students and resident

**youth who are unable to access our studio at Construction Junction in Point Breeze. Specific at-risk areas will be targeted for services to fill voids in educational and art funding gaps. We hope to offer services to residents of other placements centers who service youth unable to mainstream. As with our other services, we offer community service credit time for those participating as a community service center site.**

# **Furniture Exchange and Revamp**

## **Project Benefits:**

- **Asserts the importance of art in the vitality of our personal, professional and economic lives.**
- **Exemplifies the importance of supplemental arts programs to addresses arts budget cuts that create voids in our schools and communities.**
- **Affords opportunities for creative partnering bringing people, recovery and communities together in a forefront effort through art.**
- **Advocates for the rehabilitative needs of at-risk populations and community awareness through art.**
- **Supports environmental education and by proactively addressing environmental concerns for fewer waste products entering landfills.**
- **Provides a wide range of community service support through programs supported by the donor organizations.**
- **Provides transferable social, business and creative skills.**
- **Provides opportunities for responsible team building, planning, and management.**
- **Provides youth an opportunity to work as responsible piers in an instructional capacity.**
- **Provides youth first-hand experience in developing and managing and operating a small business from manufacturing, customer service to the end-product sales.**

The goal is to provide at-risk populations creative opportunities that will allow them to creatively learn and transfer acquired skills into productive community life.

# Donors and Volunteers

## Furniture Donations:

- Habitat for Humanity, Swissvale
- The National Council of Jewish Women, Lawrenceville
- Vincent de Paul, Sharpsburg
- U-Haul, Pittsburgh
- Construction Junction, East Liberty
- Private Donors: Maria Piantanida / Susan Benn / Dorothy Lampl / MariKyros Menneti
- Over 45 Allegheny County Employees responded to the "County Call for Furniture" with generous donations. Thank You Allegheny County!

## Paint & Painting Supplies:

- Sherwin Williams Paint Store, Forest Hills
- Lowes, Waterfront
- Construction Junction, Wilkensburg

## Furniture Storage:

- Store Express, Braddock Hills

## Furniture Delivery and Repair:

- John Oravik Industrial Mechanical Consulting
- John Paul Florida

## Volunteers:

- Becky Hudock Deputy Public Defender / Director Juvenile Division
- Stephanie Jimenez University of Pittsburgh Environmental internship
- John Paul Florida

**Thank You!**  
**To Our Generous Contributors for Your Unwavering**  
**Belief and Support!**





**BEFORE**

**So Sad...chipped, dented,  
nicked and hopeless!**



**In Process...  
Still looking a little pale!**



**Ready to Decorate...**  
**Maybe there's still hope!**



**WOW!**

# **“Got Furniture?”**

**Please Call Us!  
Donate**

**All proceeds (100 percent!) will benefit a non-profit community service project in our attempt to bring people creatively together through unlikely partnerships that benefit the recovery of us all.**

**Gerry Florida  
Artist Facilitator  
Shuman Center  
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