

## INSIGHT

# Where does it all go?

Has your furniture has outlived its usefulness? Are you sure?

By Anne Weidman, CPSM

When JSA moved to a new space in the spring of 2019, the office furnishings, some of it 30+ years old, had outlived its usefulness. Today's digital workspace needs little in the way of paper storage, relying more on innovative technology and collaboration spaces. Office renovations and upgrades typically utilize a combination of dumpsters and furniture liquidators for disposal of retired furniture. JSA looked for a more community-centered approach and turned to social media for the solution. It was fast, easy and we instantly reached a big audience.

### Social media?

As we approached our moving day, we began posting pictures and descriptions on local Facebook groups: "Sixty-five two-drawer file cabinets!" "Reception desk with lighting!" "Fifty-five magazine organizers!" "Dozens of chairs!"

The response was fast. Very fast. The pick-ups started within minutes, and we were unprepared for the onslaught. The JSA marketing department put unpacking the new space on hold and spent a week clearing the old space. We felt like philanthropists because as it turned out, nonprofit organizations were the big responders. By keeping our cast-offs out

of the landfill and offering them to the public, we were making a difference in our community.

### A parade of nonprofits

Portsmouth Music and Arts Center took flat files for their art studios. Strawberry Banke, a living history museum, snagged a wheeled whiteboard for their student education spaces. Krempels Center, a brain injury support center, obtained microwaves for their kitchen and digital cameras for their photography group; while in the same building, the Seacoast Community School took tubs of discon-

tinued fabric samples for art projects. 3S Artspace was thrilled to receive two rotary cutting mats for use at a summer design camp, and Lister Academy picked up metal shelving for classroom storage.

Discover Portsmouth and The Chase Home needed chairs. At Chase Home, it meant that eight at-risk teenagers received a better desk chair for their bedroom study space. For a teenager, that's a big deal.



*Task lighting finds a new home at Port City Makerspace.*

“JSA looked for a more community-centered approach and turned to social media for the solution...”

City Makerspace acquired enough clamp-on task lamps to outfit every workbench in their building.

Haven, a provider of support for people affected by domestic and sexual violence, retrieved chairs and file cabinets, making their admin staff very happy. Birchtree Center, a school for children and youth with autism, picked up file cabinets. Plan New Hampshire got chairs. Two charity thrift stores, Buddha's Closet and Full Circle, took shelving.

time of design projects. The hair salon owner who was thrilled to pick up our custom reception desk and lighting. The limo driver who needed a file cabinet. The regular folks setting up home offices. For a week, we launched an avalanche of posts on social media and facilitated an amazing number of giveaways.

“Reuse and recycle — it just makes sense.”



JSA conference seating replaced tired chairs for teachers at Rochester Middle School.

### Chairs and more chairs

Rochester Middle School also needed chairs, lots of chairs. Big high back conference chairs. The teachers were speechless when they realized their seating was being upgraded to leather conference chairs. Their old chairs were held together with duct tape. The middle school designated some of the chairs as flexible seating to be used in a teaching area for students who learn differently. The swivel and tilt motion on these chairs helps students stay focused on their work.

Camp Center Stage in Maine came with a box truck and left with chairs, file cabinets, work tables and a refrigerator! Port

### Businesses... and just regular folks

We also had a steady stream of local start-ups, small businesses and just regular people who were grateful to receive a freebie: The retired gentleman who plans to use magazine holders to sort a life-



Russ Grazier and Bill Charland pick up cabinets for PMAC, the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center.

### No landfill space necessary

When the space was empty, we had given away over 2500 cubic feet of furniture and office supplies. It would have filled two forty-yard, roll-off construction dumpsters. Sixteen local nonprofits received furniture and supplies. JSA was left with a nearly empty space and dozens of new connections across the region. The local landfill got almost nothing. It was a win in every way.

Today we pay close attention to our discards and keep a list of nonprofits that may benefit from our cast-offs.

Reuse and recycle — it just makes sense.



### Anne Weidman, CPSM

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