



MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Kaplowitz, Chair, Board of Legislators
FROM: Catherine F. Parker, Legislator – 7th District
DATE: May 28, 2014
RE: Information on Furniture Sharehouse

Please add these articles to the June 2nd agenda for referral to the Environment & Energy and Community Services Committees.

May 15th, 2014
Furniture Sharehouse

Met with Kate Bialo, founder of Furniture Sharehouse. Since opening in April 2007, as of October 2013, the Furniture Sharehouse has served the following:

Households: 2,378
Number of Individuals: 6,955
Number of Children: 3,499
Female Head of Household: 1,295
Items of Furniture Distributed: 36,548
Total Value: \$2,275,000

Each client must be referred from an agency and comes to the warehouse with a caseworker from the agency. The Sharehouse is open by appointment only two days/wk. There's a \$25 appointment fee (usually paid for by the agency), and a \$25 cancellation fee. Each family receives 12-15 pieces of furniture. The client has to pay \$75 to get the furniture delivered curbside, \$150 to get it delivered into their home, or the client can bring his/her own truck. There's a 6 week waiting list.

Donated furniture must be in good condition. If a donor has 3 or more pieces the Furniture Sharehouse truck will pick up the furniture. Otherwise furniture can be dropped off at their warehouse at the County airport during specific hours, or it can be dropped off in one of 4 bins throughout the county.

White Plains: 87 Gedney Way
Larchmont/Mamaroneck: Maxwell Avenue Recycling Facility
Tuckahoe: 15 Marblehead Road
Rye: Disbrow Park, 141 Oakland Beach Avenue--not yet functional

Annual Budget is about \$170,000.
Gala is October 17th. Designers are creating 4x6 vignettes for silent auction.
Mamaroneck HS has furniture Sharehouse club.

I'm attaching several info sheets that I got off their website or from Kate that are useful.

These include:

Reasons Munis should have a bin
List of referring agencies
How to set up a furniture drive



HOW TO ORGANIZE A FURNITURE DRIVE

Thank you for your interest in sponsoring a Furniture Drive in your area to benefit Furniture Sharehouse. Furniture Drives are a great way for us to collect much-needed inventory without expensive pick-up costs. Below is an outline of what it takes to organize a furniture drive. The actual preparation is straightforward, but the key to a successful furniture drive is PUBLICITY, so allow six weeks for planning and publicity.

DRIVE PREPARATION/PUBLICITY

1. Select Drive Leader(s)
2. Select Drive Date and Time (in consultation with Furniture Sharehouse)
3. Select Drive Location and obtain all necessary permits/approvals
4. Create Publicity Materials (FS will provide drafts and must approve before distribution):
 - Drive Flyer
 - Newsletter "blurb"
 - Press Release or press story
5. Publicize the Drive
 - Municipal Website, other communications
 - Print Media
 - Local TV/Cable/Radio
 - On-Line Media
 - School District/PTA Community Newsletters
 - Houses of Worship Bulletins
 - Community Bulletin Boards (library, coffee shop, deli etc.)
 - Find Locations for Display Banners (provided by Furniture Sharehouse)
6. Set Volunteer Shifts and sign up Volunteers
 - a. Volunteer Duties: greet donors and help them to complete donation form
assist unloading furniture from vehicles
label multi-piece items
assist loading furniture on to truck
assist unloading truck at warehouse
 - b. Volunteer Shifts:
 - Typical Drive is 9:00 to 1:00 (rain or shine)
 - Three Shifts 8:30 – 11:30 (at drive site)
 - 11:30 – 1:30 (at drive site)
 - 1:30 to 3:30 (at warehouse to help unload)
 - c. Number of Volunteers Recommended: 8 per shift
7. Make arrangements for disposal of unwanted items if possible (on-site dumpster, local DPW, etc.)
8. Walk the site with Furniture Sharehouse representative 2-3 weeks before Drive to determine truck and tent placement, traffic flow, etc.
9. Solicit donations of refreshments for drive volunteers (coffee and donuts for first shift, pizza for second shift)

DAY OF DRIVE

10. Set Up Required:
 - Tent (provided by FS)
 - Two 6' tables
 - Six folding chairs
 - 1-2 garbage cans
 - Sawhorses, traffic cones for delineating drop-off area
 - Hang banners, signs (provided by FS)
 - Supply Bin (pens, clipboards, tool kit etc.) provided by FS
 - Refreshments, Beverage Coolers
11. Furniture Sharehouse truck will arrive on-site 45 mins. before Drive Time with 1-2 professionals who will stay throughout and pack the truck
12. At end of Drive, break down tent, collect banners/signs etc.
13. Third Shift Volunteers meet truck at warehouse to help unload truck (professionals will move the big stuff)

POST-DRIVE

14. Assist with thank-you letters and follow-up publicity, share photos etc.

Again, thank you for considering sponsoring a Furniture Drive. For more information about us, please visit our website at www.furnituresharehouse.org. We would also be very happy to give your volunteers a tour of our warehouse before the Drive so they can see first-hand what we do and how we do it, and feel great about helping to collect furniture for Westchester families in need!

For more information, contact:

Kate Bialo
Executive Director
Furniture Sharehouse
Westchester's Furniture Bank
www.furnituresharehouse.org
Cell 914.661.7259
bialok@aol.com

May 2014



PROPOSAL FOR FURNITURE COLLECTION BIN IN MUNICIPAL YARD

What is Furniture Sharehouse?

Furniture Sharehouse, Westchester's Furniture Bank, collects gently-used furniture from the public at our warehouse at the Westchester County Airport and re-distributes it free of charge to needy families referred by social service agencies. Since 2007, we have provided over 38,000 items of free furniture to more than 6,800 individuals, helping them fill their empty apartments and rebuild their lives with dignity.

www.furnituresharehouse.org.

What purpose would be served by a Furniture Collection Bin in our municipality's yard?

We obtain most of our furniture by doing individual residential pick-ups around the County, which is expensive. We are looking for ways to increase the amount of inventory we collect while minimizing trucking costs. If we are able to collect furniture in your municipal yard from residents, we can make one trip to collect a full load of furniture instead of many individual trips.

What benefit will be provided to our municipality and its residents?

Your residents will be pleased to have an easy, local alternative place to bring their unwanted furniture and will be happy to know that their furniture is going to help a needy family instead of into the waste stream. Your municipality will have less furniture to pick up curb-side, and will be reinforcing its commitment to recycling.

What kind of container is needed?

Clean, 20' enclosed container with door access wide enough to accommodate larger furniture items; would need to be able to be locked.

Who provides the container?

Furniture Sharehouse does not have the budget to buy or rent a container, so we ask participating municipalities to obtain the donation/use of a suitable container. These bins typically cost a few thousand dollars and are eligible for 50% state reimbursement by the NYSDEC, under their Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Program (MWR&R)-Capital Projects Grant.

What types of furniture will be collected?

FS accepts moderately-sized basic home furniture in good condition. A detailed list of what we do and don't accept is found on our website. We do accept used mattresses and upholstered items that are pest-free and in good condition, but if accepting these items at your facility is an issue, these could be excluded from the list of locally-accepted items.

Who will screen the donations and how?

We would provide on-site training for yard personnel so that they can advise residents which items are acceptable for placement in the container and which are not. We can tailor drop-off procedures and hours to suit your yard operations.

How often will the container be emptied and by whom?

We ask your yard personnel to contact our pick-up service when the container is full and we will come and empty the container. At the time of pick-up, any items which our driver deems unacceptable will be left for disposal by yard personnel.

Does Furniture Sharehouse have any municipal collection bins in place?

We currently have four bins in place: Larchmont/Mamaroneck, Tuckahoe, White Plains, Rye

Questions: Kate Bialo, Executive Director
bialok@aol.com 914.661.7259



2014 REFERRING/MEMBER AGENCIES (updated 03/31/2014)

Andrus Children's Center	AND
Catholic Charities Community Services	CCCS
Choice of New Rochelle	CONR
Common Ground Community	CGC
Community Housing Innovations	CHI
Family Services of Westchester	FSW
Family Service Society of Yonkers	FSY
Grace Church Community Center Inc.	GCC
Hispanic Resource Center	HRC
Hope's Door, Inc.	NWS
Human Development Services of Westchester	HDSW
IFCA	IFCA
Mental Health Association	MHA
Mt. Vernon United Tenants Inc.	MVUT
North American Family Institute	NAFI
Providence House	PROV
Rockland Psychiatric Center	RCC
Shepherd's Flock	SHF
St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester	SVMC
The Guidance Center	TGC
Washingtonville Housing Alliance	WHA
WestCOP	WCOP
Westhab	WHAB
Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health	DCMH
Westchester County Dept. of Social Services	DSS
Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc.	WDM
Westchester Institute for Human Development	WIHD
Westchester Jewish Community Services	WJCS
Westchester Residential Opportunities	WRO



FACT SHEET

- Furniture Sharehouse, Westchester's Furniture Bank, collects donations of **gently used, average-sized** furniture from the public and redistributes it to needy Westchester families free of charge
- Our clients include those moving out of homeless shelters; women and children escaping domestic violence; working families struggling to stay ahead; young adults aging out of foster care; victims of fires or other disasters
- Our clients are referred by a member network of 30+ social service agencies, ensuring that our furniture goes directly to those who need it most
- Since opening in April 2007, we have served over 2,589 households – over 7,454 individuals, including over 3,818 children and 1,425 female heads of household
- Each household receives 12-15 pieces of basic furniture, plus accessories; to date, we have distributed over 40,304 items of furniture worth over \$2.4 million **free of charge** to clients who could never have afforded to purchase it
- We have recycled over 1,500 tons of furniture by keeping it out of the waste stream
- We are a NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation and tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3)

Here's what some of our clients say:

"I'm so glad, because I complete[d] my apartment with the furniture and now I feel comfortable and my child say I feel nice with the donation - thank you so much!
Marina, Westhab Client

I cannot express to you how much I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to fill my home. There is nothing better than to have enough furniture in your house so that a family may feel at home.
Marta, DSS Client

I wanted you to know just how it makes my family feel to come home and be proud of where we live and how our home looks. We don't just come home now and sit on my bed and eat dinner or lay in a bed to watch TV. We have a real home with real furniture and it makes us feel like a real family. I thank you and your organization for being there for me and my boys.

Deeann, Former Shelter Resident

Warehouse: Building #3, Airport Road
Westchester County Airport
White Plains, NY

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 702
Larchmont, NY 10538
914.834.1294

www.furnituresharehouse.org
Info and donations info@furnituresharehouse.org

HERE IS WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT FURNITURE SHAREHOUSE...

When families that have struggled with homelessness, domestic violence, eviction or other disasters finally obtain housing, they are faced with another challenge -- no furniture and no money to buy any. For these families, getting free furniture from Furniture Sharehouse means no more sleeping on the floor, a table to share a family meal, a dresser to store their belongings -- a home to take pride in. Our goal is to help these families create their own "Comforts of Home."

Furniture Sharehouse is a God-send to countless people like me who need things but have to wait because they don't have the money. I have had to throw stuff out because of bed bugs and I didn't know when I would be able to get something new. My children are very happy and appreciative of the stuff that we were able to get. Thank you again!
Michelle, Ossining

**"FURNITURE SHAREHOUSE
IS A GOD-SEND"**

I want to thank the Furniture Sharehouse for providing my family with much-needed furniture. I received a beautiful rug, a chest of drawers, a lamp, a nightstand and a twin bed. All of this furniture was needed for my son's bedroom in my home so he can return from foster care. All of the furniture was in great condition and my son, when he comes home for weekend visits, really enjoys the usefulness of it all.

Elaine, New Rochelle

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thank you for helping me and my children with some great and much-needed furniture. I have been sleeping on the floor for a few months because I could not afford a bed for myself. Thanks to you I have a wonderful mattress to sleep on. Additionally, my son now has a dresser to keep his clothes instead of feeling like he is living in a hotel because the only place we had to keep his clothes was in a suitcase. We also have a chair to sit on and have our meals and it gives us more of a family feel when we eat. Please know that you have helped this family tremendously.

Marian, Mt. Vernon

My family and I are eternally grateful for the furniture we received. Myself for one, have not had a bed to sleep on due to bedbugs in my apartment. My children have never had a dresser to put their clothes in, my budget couldn't afford it. Thank you so very much for this service. Happy Family!

Bobbi, Yonkers

Thank you for all of the beautiful furniture and artwork that was donated to me. Coming from a shelter I would not have been able to buy furniture for my home and make it as comfy as it is now, but with your help that was obtained. The work you do is of great importance, I appreciate everything. I am now able to have guests enter my home and feel proud of how your furniture turned my apartment into a true home that's comfortable. Thank you so much.

Aliya, Mt. Vernon

I wanted to thank you for the wonderful furniture. I had been living in a nursing home prior to moving to my apartment and I had very few things. You made my apartment into my home. I am blind and the volunteers helped me find things I needed. It felt like a fun shopping spree. Thanks for everything.

Shulana, Yonkers

**"YOU MADE MY APARTMENT
INTO MY HOME"**

**FURNITURE
SHAREHOUSE**
Westchester's Furniture Bank



Help make a house a home