



THE *Heart* OF THE TRIANGLE

Sharing the vision and supporting the missions of the Triangle area non-profit community

Turning Used Goods into Works of Art

by Judy Liu, MPH



Do you have leftover construction paper, crayons and craft paint at home? Do you hesitate throwing them out but don't know where to donate them? Since 1991, the Scrap Exchange has been collecting materials from local businesses and residents and distributing them through a variety of programs. Their creative reuse arts

center contains a retail store, an art gallery, a Design Center that hosts classes, a Make and Take classroom for open studio art-making and much more. Since its inception, the Scrap Exchange has collected and diverted from the waste stream more than 1,000 tons of reusable materials.

The Scrap Exchange is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization celebrating its 25th year anniversary. Their mission is to promote creativity, environmental awareness, and community through reuse. The Scrap Exchange collects materials from hundreds of individuals, businesses, industries and municipal sources and distributes those materials through their retail store in Durham, North Carolina as well as through workshops, parties, and outreach events across the Southeast. They collect materials from more than 250 industries within a 100-mile radius of Durham. Materials include foam, paper, fabric, zippers, buttons, test tubes, and much more. They also accept contributions from individuals. They welcome craft materials, art supplies, vintage goods and other unique items. They accept more than 5,000 drop-off donations each year.

The Scrap Exchange creates a win-win-win situation for everyone involved — donors are eligible for a tax deduction

for the value of the items they donate; community members have access to hard-to-find, affordable materials; and usable materials are kept from entering the waste stream. Collected materials are sold in the retail store and are also featured in a variety of creative arts programs and workshops. The "Events by the Truckload" program travels to large-scale community festivals and events where the Scrap Exchange provides hands-on, creative arts activities. They also travel to schools for classroom workshops and after-school activities, and they host workshops and parties at the Creative Reuse Center. They teach professional development workshops for educators and childcare providers that explain how to incorporate reclaimed materials into their curriculum and they also share information on where they can find materials in their neighborhood.

In addition to the retail space, they have a Make-N-Take Room (for open studio activities, parties, and workshops), a design center, an art gallery (offering monthly exhibits of art made from reused and recycled products), an Artists' Marketplace (selling upcycled products from local artists and craftspeople) and office space (for their management). They have had more than 3,000 open studio participants to date, and some 180 artists have had their artwork displayed in the art gallery. They have made over fifty donations to schools, local arts councils, artists, social service programs, hospitals and prisons. Store sales and income generated by fee-for-service programming supports their operations and activities.

The Scrap Exchange is largely self-sustaining, with nearly 90% of their annual budget coming from income generated through store sales and fee-for-service programming. The remaining 10% of their budget comes from grants and from individual donations. The Scrap Exchange is always interested in having additional volunteers.

The retail store is located at 2050 Chapel Hill Road in Durham and is open 11am–7pm Sunday–Friday and 10am–7pm on Saturday. For information, call the store at 919-688-6960 or visit online at <http://scrapexchange.org>

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