

TRASH TO TREASURE



Project Challenge

With the development of a new headquarters building in Boston on the horizon, Liberty Mutual challenged their project team to focus on, not only minimizing the environmental impact of such an endeavor, but also improving the local community. One of the buildings planned for demolition was the former Boston Salvation Army headquarters that had relocated to a new space in Canton. The first step was the disposition of the contents of the building which, to many people, was viewed as trash.

Liberty Mutual, however, was convinced that the upholstered oak church pews and built-in balcony seating in the chapel, the office furniture and commercial kitchen equipment and numerous other interior furnishings would be valuable to local non profits and schools.

Process

Following the guiding principles established at the outset of the development project, Liberty Mutual partnered with The Furniture Trust, a non profit committed to environmentally responsible solutions for the disposition of office furniture and equipment. The Furniture Trust contacted a number of local churches, schools and non profits informing the groups about the available inventory, distributing photos and conducting site walk-throughs.

The excitement grew, not only with the non profit groups but with Liberty Mutual employees who connected The Furniture Trust with their local churches and schools. As a result, Liberty Mutual committed resources to disconnecting drinking fountains, a commercial stove and dishwasher, and removing draperies and solid wood doors to maximize the items available to salvage.

RECYCLING FACT

Every time a ton of steel is recycled, 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,000 pounds of coal and 40 pounds of limestone are preserved.

(Source: School and College Magazine, June 1998)



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"It's a great story; unwanted furniture and fixtures from the Salvation Army finding a new home in local schools and churches. This is a real statement about Liberty Mutual's commitment to the community and the environment through action. It's not just a policy."

*Christine Mosholder:
Cofounder of The Furniture
Trust, Boston, MA*



"We are truly grateful for the generous donation of church pews and office equipment, this is like Christmas!"

Stephanie Finklea: Greater Victory Temple Church, Mattapan, MA



TEAM

LIBERTY MUTUAL
Sean Murphy
Jay Gentile

THE FURNITURE TRUST
Furniture Donation

CASEY AND HAYES
Moving Services

**INTERSTATE OFFICE
PARTITIONS**
Furniture Dismantling

Results

Ultimately, The Furniture Trust established a pick up schedule with the groups over three Saturdays. Volunteers from the recipient organizations, the Boston Public Schools, churches in Mattapan, Taunton, East Boston and various other non profits loaded their trucks with office furniture, church pews, chairs, a piano, an organ, office equipment and construction materials.

Not only did this commitment by Liberty Mutual provide furniture and equipment to neighbors in the community, but it repurposed five tons of product that otherwise may have reached a landfill. What to many appeared to be trash has found a second life in neighboring schools churches and civic organizations.