

## ReStore's secret untangled

If you are wondering what the ReStore is all about, the twisted chandelier saga is a good place to start.

They were sitting in Habitat for Humanity's Western Canada Distribution Centre in Vancouver: 23 beautiful lead crystal creations, some of them seven feet long. Nobody wanted them; they'd become hopelessly tangled during handling and shipping. They somehow wound up in the distribution centre gathering dust — until Luanne St. Louis heard about them.

St. Louis, the ReStore manager here, always has her eye out for a deal; she can see possibility where others see hopelessness. She brought the chandeliers to Sechelt and set some volunteers to work untangling them — a task that took about four hours per light. Luanne even took a "therapy day" on a slow Saturday to untangle one of them herself.

"It was my om moment," she says, making the sound of a chanting Buddhist monk.

It wasn't long before the lamps were creating a sensation.

"There were lots of oohs and aahs," she says. They really sent out a buzz."

Although the chandeliers retailed for \$1,500, St. Louis priced them at under \$225 and they flew out of the store. "They are the reason our March was smashing."

Smashing is a word often heard around the ReStore, and we're not talking about the shattering of lead crystal. It's sales records that are being smashed, pretty much every month. March was the biggest month ever — until April came along. And May.

Each year, the HFHSC board sets sales goals for the ReStore, and each year, St. Louis and her staff and volunteers keeps exceeding them.

"Luanne always sets out to meet or beat her targets," says Margie Garrard, the chair of the ReStore committee. So far, the beat goes on.

St. Louis credits the store's success to its organization. "People like how this store is set up. It is a nice feeling. People can find what they want."

But spending a Saturday afternoon at the store shows that its success is due to much more than organization. People have fun there; both customers and staff.

"This job is fun because people come in and know my name. We are building relationships here. We have lots of fun with customers. We have regulars. Hundreds of regulars. Some come in every morning, sometimes just to talk, sometimes to see what's new. We joke around; there's a lot of camaraderie."

As if to illustrate this, Steve Murdoch, who volunteers at the store, wanders up to the checkout counter and hams it up with a flexible floor lamp, pretending it's a micro-



Some of the friendly faces that will greet you at ReStore (clockwise from left): Luanne St. Louis, Khalid Kahn, Bruce Yeoman, Stuart Gicquel, Peter Stockton, Sheryl Ryer and Cori Lynn Germiquet.

phone. "Rockstar Steve," Luanne says.

"Actually, we did have a microphone here once," says Kim Spanks, an employee at the store, "but we sold it."

That's another reason behind the store's success: You never know what you might find there. A full-sized sarcophagus that was donated to the store caused quite a stir last summer; it quickly found a new home on the coast.

Then there was a dining room suite from Thailand. A couple had bought it for \$15,000 and had it shipped here. Each chair back was hand carved. "It was stunning," St. Louis says. After the couple changed décor, it was donated to the ReStore and now hosts family dinners in a new dining room.

"I see this place as a department store. We've got everything — tools, hardware, home décor — like walking into a Walmart." Except it is a Walmart where the greetings are genuine, the deals are one of a kind and the profits enrich the entire Sunshine Coast.

Since ReStore merchandise is donated (in exchange for a charitable receipt), and much of the work is done by volunteers, almost 60 per cent of what you spend there goes directly to building affordable homes right here on the Sunshine Coast.

Some of the donations are interesting, to say the least.

"The guys in the back will say, 'this is just junk.' I say, 'no, we'll take it,' and what do you know? In a couple of hours, it has sold," says St. Louis.

Many people who are downsizing or moving donate practically everything in

their homes.

"A guy recently came in whose wife had died and he was selling their home here and moving to Vancouver. He was thinking of donating the contents of his house. He just came in to talk. I ended up going to his house and went through everything and then arranged to have it picked up," St. Louis says. Most of it has already been sold.

"I know what is a deal and what is not," St. Louis says. "I call it a gift. My idea is to move product; just keep it moving and get more money to build affordable houses."

St. Louis is called away to check out a delivery to the rear doors; it's a good opportunity to check out some of the more unusual items in the store, such as a pallet of burlap coffee sacks. By the front door is a 10-foot Seahawk 3 inflatable boat with oars, pumps and cushions for \$150. A beautiful green leather reclining chair is wheeled out the door.

St. Louis returns, slightly out of breath. "I just unloaded a bunch of laminate flooring. This is my gym."

It may be a gym to her, but to more and more savvy shoppers on the coast, this store is a gem.

*If you want to get involved in the ReStore fun, as a donor, customer, volunteer or all three, see its website at <http://restoresc.com>*

## A solid foundation

This year has seen a significant rebirth of our organization. Many aspects of Habitat for Humanity Sunshine Coast have seen changes and improvements over this past year. Two of the townhomes (units 13 and 14) at the build site at Wilson Creek have almost been finished after overcoming some challenges from the previous year. Financially, our organization has also experienced significant growth.

Our Restore operations showed a \$120,000 increase in gross revenues over the previous year with a net contribution to our resources of \$312,011. The recycling group did very well this year while overcoming some challenges and it contributed \$41,115 to help continue our build programs.

Donations and other revenues contributed over \$100,000 to our gross revenues. Subsequent to our year end and only part way into our next year, even more has been raised from private donors as well as \$100,000 from the provincial government.

Expenses this past year have increased over the previous year, but have been kept in line with our budget, thanks in part to the previously mentioned increases in revenues.

We have also had another year's finances audited by the same firm as last year in the interest of consistency. Much of our revenue is in the form of grants. Many of these benefactors ask for and sometimes even require audited statements. Having audits done not only benefits our stakeholders, but also assists us in obtaining additional funding.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members and staff for their work in making and keeping us a financially solid entity.

— D. F. (Dean) Clement,  
HFHSC Board Treasurer.  
Statements are reflected  
from December 2016  
year-end draft Audit.

### Sacrifice fly

Your donations and purchases at the ReStore help ensure everyone's a winner



## \$312,011

Restore net revenue for 2016



## \$41,115

Recycling net revenue for 2016

### THANK YOU

for your support and donations.

All of this net revenue went toward building affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast.

## Habitat **FORE** Humanity

Do you have plans for that special man in your life this Father's Day weekend?

### Why not treat him to a day of golf at our Father's Day golf tournament?

We have a fantastic tournament planned for you! It's **Saturday, June 17**, at Blue Ocean Golf Club.

Registration includes green fees, cart rental, lunch, dinner, beverage tickets and a few more surprises. There's even a hole in one contest with a **prize of \$50,000**.

All proceeds support our continued effort to build affordable homes on the Sunshine Coast.

Call us at the ReStore today to register or to be a sponsor or volunteer.

What better way to celebrate dad than out on the links!!!

**Call 604-885-6737**



Tournament organizers Susan Attiana, Margie Garrard, Tara Roden and Mary-Ann Thiessen practice for the big day.