

'Trash to Treasure' raises thousands through recycling



Theater and dance majors Lindsey Miller, left, and Cara Smith, right, peruse the tables covered in shoes, apparel, knickknacks and house ware in front of the Peter Flawn Academic Center during a university-wide garage sale Friday afternoon. All merchandise was priced at \$1 and proceeds benefited the Campus Environmental Center.

- Danielle Villasana | Daily Texan Staff

TAGS

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Tables filled with clothing, shoes, accessories, school supplies, electronics and household items dominated the entrance plaza to the Flawn Academic Center as a student environmental group hosted its seventh annual “[Trash to Treasure](#)” garage sale.

[The Campus Environmental Center](#) raised \$2,144 on Friday by selling items students in campus residence halls donated at the end of last semester. Most clothing items and pairs of shoes cost only \$1. Of approximately 2,000 pounds of items for sale, the group sold 80 percent and donated the remainder to Austin State Hospital, a local mental health facility.

Campus Environmental Center adviser and sustainability operations assistant manager Karen Blaney said Austin State Hospital and the center have had a mutually beneficial relationship since 2008.

“They’re always in need of clothes for their residential patients,” Blaney said. “They’ve been able to come with a van and rolling bins and pick things up really efficiently, so we’ve always worked with them.”

Many universities collect items from student dormitories at the end of the year in charity drives, but UT is unique in reselling those items to students, Blaney said.

“It’s really easy to explain to the student population what we’re doing, and people really like the idea of thrift sales,” Blaney said. “We need a fundraiser that makes sense for what we do, for the Campus Environmental Center message.”

“Trash to Treasure” coordinator Reanna Bain said the organization usually holds the garage sale before the fall semester but changed the date this year to increase publicity opportunities.

Bain said she hopes the event will encourage students to think about how items they no longer want can be reused by others and help them develop recycling habits.

“For students, their lifestyle choices now reflect what they’re going to do in the future,” Bain said. “If they recycle now, they’re doing their part with their community, and that’s what they’re going to continue doing as adults when they’re out of school.”

Psychology senior Lisa Johnson said the sale was an opportunity to shop for necessary and fun items while sticking to a budget.

“I have a job where I have to look professional,” Johnson said. “Professional clothing is extremely expensive, and this is so much easier. This is so much better for me.”

Adesile Okeowo, a Middle Eastern studies teaching assistant, said he frequents garage sales because U.S. retail goods are far more expensive than those in his native Nigeria. He said throwing away the items would have been a wasted economic opportunity.

“It could have been thrown away, and it’s going to deny some people access to things,” Okeowo said. “After I got a few things from the H-E-B, Target, Wal-Mart, CVS, I stopped buying things from there. They are just too expensive for me.”