Take-Home Volunteer Program Guidebook

Welcome to the Take-Home Volunteer Program!

Thank you for your interest in becoming part of The WasteShed's volunteer corps! This program was created to help expand our reach and make volunteering more accessible for everyone. Whether you're unable to come in during our regular hours, prefer to work from home, or are part of a community that could benefit from at-home projects, this program is here for you. By joining, you'll help us sort and organize donated materials for our store while making a positive impact in your community.

This guide will walk you through the process of becoming an at-home volunteer and participating in the program. If you have specific questions about anything, please reach out to the store you would like to volunteer with:

For Chicago- Earl@thewasteshed.com

Evanston@thewasteshed.com

How It Works

Step 1: Sign Up

To get started, please fill out our online Google Form with your contact information and a brief description of the tasks you're interested in helping with. This will help us match you with tasks that are suited to your interests and skills. Depending on our capacity, we'll reach out to schedule a pickup time.

Google Form Link: CLICK HERE

Step 2: Pick Up Your Donation

Once your sign-up is approved, we'll contact you to schedule a time for you to pick up your take-home donation materials. During your visit, a staff member will give you a quick lesson on how to sort and organize the materials. You'll leave with a task in hand and everything you need to get started!

Step 3 Collateral Deposit

Before taking your materials home, we'll ask for a small collateral deposit. This is to ensure that materials are returned in a timely manner.

Two options for collateral:

1. **$10 Deposit:** This is refundable when you return the materials.
2. **Written Agreement:** Sign a slip agreeing that you will be charged a $3 overdue fee for each month the materials are past due. This fee must be paid before you can take home new materials or make a purchase at The WasteShed.

We modeled the check-out system after libraries! Our goal is definitely *not* to be punitive or authoritarian, we just want to make sure there's a relatively low stakes system in place for keeping folks accountable to the flow of merchandise in and out of the store.

Step 4: Log Your Donation

When you pick up your materials, staff will record all the details in our logbook. We will also create a **"Donation Library Card"** with your information and the specifics of the donation, including what you're taking home, your planned return date, and how much store credit you will receive based on the size of the task. You'll get a copy of this card to take home with you as a reference.

Step 5: Complete Your Task

Take your materials home and complete the sorting, labeling, or organizing task assigned to you. Tasks are typically simple and often fun! We'll also make sure that you receive instructions with everything you need to get the job done :-)

Step 6: Return Materials

Once you've finished your project, bring the sorted, labeled, and ready-to-price materials back to The WasteShed. Make sure everything is organized and clearly labeled to make it easier for our staff to process. Don't forget to bring your Donation Library Card with you to check in your items.

Examples of Take-Home Volunteer Tasks

Here are some examples of the types of tasks you might be assigned:

- **Yarn Untangling & Balling** - Untangle yarn and ball it into neat bundles, securing them with rubber bands and tags.
- **Button Sorting** - Sort buttons by color and type.
- **Bead Sorting** - Sort beads into categories based on size, color, and type.

- **Fabric Measuring & Rolling** - Measure fabric and roll it up neatly for sale.
- **Sticker Sorting** - Organize stickers into categories by theme and price them.
- **Signage Creation** - Help create fun and informative signs for the store.
- **Sewing Notions Organization** - Pair up knitting needles and sewing notions and tag them.
- **Stationery Bundling** - Create themed stationery bundles (e.g., paper, photography, postcards).
- **Mystery Egg Creation** - Put together surprise “mystery eggs” for sale in the store.

Who Is This Program For?

The Take-Home Volunteer Program is perfect for a variety of people:

- **People with Limited Availability**
- **Night Owls**
- **Sensory-Sensitive Volunteers**
- **Seniors and Memory Care Volunteers**
- **Folks with disabilities**
- **Clubs & Organizations**

3 Main Rules for Take Home Donations:

1. **Return Date**: When you take home materials, you will be given a suggested return date. Please do your best to stick to this timeline. If you’re unable to return the materials on time, let us know as soon as possible.
2. **Quality of Work**: We rely on you to return materials organized, labeled, and ready for pricing. If you’re unsure about something, feel free to reach out to us for guidance.
3. **No day of pick-ups:** Our store can get really busy and the back of house is often fairly chaotic. Currently, we do not have the ability or capacity to arrange take-home volunteer projects on-site without a previous request. Please email ahead to sign-up.

FAQ

Q: Can I take home multiple projects at once?
A: We prefer that volunteers take home one project at a time to ensure we don't run out of materials for other volunteers. However, if you finish your first project early, we can provide you with more tasks.

Q: What if I need to cancel or change my pickup time?
A: Just let us know! We understand that schedules can change, so we're happy to reschedule your pickup or adjust your timeline.

Q: How long do I have to complete a project?
A: The typical timeframe is two weeks - one month, but we can be flexible. Just let us know your estimated return date when you pick up your donation materials.

Q. Do I have to come into the store to pick up my project?
A: Right now we don't have the capability to do drop-offs, so you or a friend will need to visit the store to pick-up and drop-off the materials. Please let us know if you have any access needs that we can support when you come in (e.g. delivering to your car, coming in before we open so it's more quiet, etc.)

Contact Information

If you have any questions or need further assistance, feel free to contact us at either evanston@thewasteshed.com OR earl@thewasteshed.com (for the chicago location) depending on which store you're looking to contact.

Thank you for helping us make The WasteShed a more accessible part of the Chicagoland creative community!