

Daily Union Article
Saturday, August 5, 2017
Donate, Repurpose or Recycle

With school starting just around the corner, I have found myself looking at school supply lists and clothing inventory to make sure the boys have what they need to get going with school. That also means I need to sort through dressers to weed out the clothes they have worn out or outgrown.

Some of the clothing simply needs cut in to rags because they are worn beyond repair. Some need minor repairs, like sewing on a button or patching up a small hole. Others are gently worn and should be passed on to another child who can get full use out of the garment. Even my own closet warrants a bit of inventory review. As you sort through your stack(s) of clothing, you need to consider what you want to do with it: donate, repurpose, or recycle. The most common of the three is to donate unwanted clothing.

When donating clothing to another person or a charitable organization, you should take some time looking over each item to ensure it is ready to be passed on. You'll need to carve out some time for this task, but it is time well spent.

Spend a day working through all the clothing closets and dressers you have in the house. Clean closets will give you more space to store new clothes and reduce the clutter that seems to easily accumulate in our storage spaces.

Review each garment closely. Check for any tears, rips, holes or other damage that may make the garment undesirable. If the condition is so poor that you wouldn't wear it, you should not expect that someone else would want it.

Make sure the garment is clean and free of stains. Treat any stains just as you would if you were going to keep the garment for yourself. If the clothing has stains, smells musty or dirty, take the extra time to wash and dry it before you donate it.

Find a clean, odor-free box that you can put the clothing in. It is also helpful to make a list of the items you are putting in the box. For example, two hats, 3 sets of gloves, 5 pair of shorts, and 4 pants. Including the sizes for each would be helpful to the volunteers who will remove the contents of the box. This list also comes in handy when claiming your donations on your annual income taxes.

Seal the box with packaging tape and label the outside with "Clothing" along with the name of the organization you plan to donate it to.

There are several places in the Junction City area that accept clothing donations. Our local Good Will store at 1008 W. 6th Street here in Junction City is open 7 days a week. Their hours on Monday thru Saturday are 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and 1:00 – 6:00 on

Sunday afternoons. With the school season starting, there is need for children's shoes and clothing in addition to the other items they accept. For more information, you can reach Good Will at 785-238-8920.

Another place to donate clothing is at the Caring Place at 1013-B West 8th Street, Junction City. They are open to receive or pick up clothing on Monday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7 p.m., Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Thursday and Friday 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. You can reach them at 785-238-4428.

Located at the west side of the parking lot, JC Naz offers the House of Hope at 10205 S. Washington, Junction City. They accept donations during open hours only. The hours of operation for the House of Hope are Monday 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Thursday 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.; and the 1st and 3rd Saturday from 10 a.m. – noon. Contact the church office for more information at 785-762-4402.

Passing on our gently worn clothes so that they have the chance for a well-deserved second life is a smart idea. It saves on the valuable waste site space we allocate for refuse and offers folks who may not have the resources they need to keep their family in clothing. However, there is a strong trend in our country of purchasing from second-hand stores to make a positive impact on our environment. This presents another opportunity for contributing in a positive way to clothing recycling efforts.

Because there are far more clothes donated than can typically be used, there are thousands of secondhand textile processors in the United States. Most of these are small family owned businesses many of which are several generations old. They skim the best clothes off the top to distribute to thrift stores and outlet stores, send some for repurposing, and the rest is moved on. What isn't shredded and used for other purposes in the U.S. is wrapped up, tied up, baled and sold to used-clothing vendors around the world.

If each of us would, at least occasionally, shop our local thrift-stores and second-hand stores, we would gain a new look, relieve the stress on our waste sites caused by discarded clothing, and reduce the amount of textile waste we have in general. As you make your decision to donate, repurpose, or recycle consider the larger impact your choices have. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!