

# Tell them they're helping, not hurting, the needy!

By Kate Holmes

I was chatting with a far-off friend recently, and he mentioned that he'd noticed how much attention the press has been giving thrift shops. I said yes, indeed, it's a great way to shop, to save money and to be careful with our planet's resources.

"Oh, I don't shop at those places," he said. "I'd feel like I was cheating the poor out of good buys. I can afford to buy new but they can't so it's not *fair* for me to shop there."

John had the mistaken idea, as many middle-class-and-above people do, that thrift shops are in existence simply as "subsidized shopping" venues for the poor. These well-off folks think that by *avoiding* shopping in your thrift store they are doing good by "leaving the bargains for those who need them."

While many not-for-profit shops do indeed see part of their mission as providing a valuable shopping opportunity for those of limited means, most shops also aim to make profits in order to provide other services to the needy. It's important that well-off potential shoppers know this. "Shopping at OurStore not only gets you deals, it gets you warm fuzzies: The profits from your purchases provided a safe place for mothers and children to stay for over 12000 nights last year."

So if your potential customers do not understand that "thrift shopping isn't just for the needy", make sure they receive the message that "Our proceeds fund X and Y so we invite you to find the deals you deserve, for the sake of those in need in our community." And make sure they receive this message over and over again.

I was able to conclude my conversation with John by saying, "Thrift shops not only are an inexpensive way for everyone to shop, and a great opportunity to re-purpose everything from the kitchen sink to a tool box, but their retail profits help your community. Shopping at not-for-profit thrifts does triple good: good for your budget, good for Mother Nature, and good for those around us who need the help those shops fund!" ♻️

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—Kate Holmes  
*Too Good to be Threw*

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