

# For a Rewarding Decluttering Experience, Find the Right Home for Each Item

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

If you are not in a big hurry to clear out your place, I recommend taking the time to find the right home for each of your unwanted possessions to make your decluttering experience meaningful.

Too many books? New books with shiny covers can be donated to local library and jumble sales. However, you may have older books that have value to selected collectors. The solution is to find special book collections.

Recently, I donated an early edition of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir to the University of Pennsylvania Library's women's studies collection. The librarian was happy to receive it. The same day I donated a book describing the investigation of the 1976 Legionnaires' disease epidemic in Philadelphia to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, whose collection focuses mainly on the history of Philadelphia, Eastern Pennsylvania, and the greater Delaware Valley.

In all cases, you must contact the librarian in advance to find out if they want the book. Find libraries that sound appropriate; go on their website to find the appropriate contact person's name and address; send an email or letter describing your prospective donation. Once they agree to accept your donation, you can either take it there in person if it is a local place or send it by U.S. mail using book rate.

After you've exhausted all your ideas, the remaining books—excluding textbooks—can be donated to Book Corner, the Free Library store, 311 N 20th St (near Callowhill). Call for an appointment (215-567-0527), and they will help you unload the books. (I gave away old textbooks by posting them for free on Craig's List.)

Clothes or accessories that can be resold? Take them to Project HOME's Home Spun Retail Boutique, 1523 Fairmount Ave, 215-232-6322. This store is operated by a formerly homeless man who takes excellent care of the inventory and displays it beautifully. Friends who have donated high-quality women's and men's clothes felt good about leaving clothing and accessories there. Proceeds benefit Project HOME, a nonprofit organization with the mission of ending homelessness by providing affordable housing, employment opportunities, education, and health care.

If you have no way to personally deliver donations, get a free shipping label from Amazon on this website: <https://givebackbox.com/amazon> Pack resalable clothing, household goods, and other items listed on Goodwill's website <http://www.goodwill.org/donate-and-shop/donate-stuff/> into a shipping carton (remove all labels and markings from used carton) and give it to your mail carrier. It costs you absolutely nothing and you don't have to take it anywhere.

Worn-out clothes, sheets, or other textiles? These are items you would normally throw

in the trash. Thrift stores and jumble sales don't want them because they won't sell. Do not throw them away! Take them to an H&M clothing store where they will be used in a textile recycling program. A nearby H&M store is located at 1725 Walnut. Bag the textiles and drop them in the bin near the cash register. You will get a coupon for 10% off your next purchase. H&M wants to prevent textiles from taking up space in landfills, instead reusing textiles for other purposes. "In 2017, we collected more than 17,771 tons of textiles, the equivalent of 89 million T-shirts," H&M reports.

Nothing is wasted. Donate art supplies to the Village of Arts & Humanities. Donate tools to the West Philly Tool Library. Donate musical instruments to Rock to the Future. Donate cell phones to Cell Phones for Soldiers. Donate old theater playbills to the University of Pennsylvania's Kislak Center for Special Collections. Donate Yiddish books to the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA. Donate office supplies to just about any non-profit organization's office. These are just a few of the many places accepting special donations. You will find it worthwhile to take the time to do the research to find a new home for possessions you once treasured.

*This article is a sequel to Bonnie's article "Too Much Stuff: Where to Sell or Donate Things You Don't Want," Center City Quarterly, Summer 2017.*

## Out & About

Uncle George Productions celebrated the completion of location filming of *Crumpet* by thanking the local community with free treats from food trucks on the corner of 22nd and Spruce Streets. Nothing says "Thank you" better than grilled cheese and cupcakes!



Donna Strug



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