

Give Your Stuff Away Day

By Mike Morone

A bright red toaster appeared in my house recently, a new purchase of my wife's. I had no idea we needed a new toaster. I have no problem with the red toaster – it's the old one that irks me. It's stored on a shelf, taking up space. Our toasting needs are clearly met by the new model, yet we clutter our home with the old one. Plus, maybe someone nearby needs a toaster. Wouldn't it be cool if that person magically knocked on our door, saying "Got any old toasters?"

My family also owns other stuff we never use – clothes that don't fit, out-of-style shoes, books already read, prom dresses, coats we never wear, CDs, games, and other household items. No big deal, but multiply this stuff by America and we're talking millions of items, worth billions, just wasting away. Wouldn't it be cool if we could magically shift ownership of all this stuff, in one weekend, with close to zero effort, at no cost?

Well, cool happens on May 15, 2010. It's called Give Your Stuff Away Day and it will work (almost) like magic, as long as you help promote the idea and follow procedures about acceptable and prohibited items.

Here are the details – on May 15, we bring to our curbs, items of value we no longer want. No trash, no recyclables, no illegal or dangerous items, no food, drugs, chemicals, or weapons of any kind. Just safe, solid, valuable items we would like to donate to others. At the same time, millions of people will be driving, riding, or walking around picking up free items. Instantly, the world's largest giveaway – very cool, indeed.

You'll feel good because you uncluttered a bit and helped a neighbor. Others will be happy obtaining some free items. Landfills will shrink a bit and the economy might even spark up a tiny bit from the money everybody saves.

It's not really magic – there will be a bit of a mess in some neighborhoods for awhile. We'll also experience some additional traffic. Think of Christmas – a wonderful time of year, but messy. Speaking of special days, Give Your



Stuff Away Day is similar to Halloween: lots of people participating in small ways to help lots of others. There are many logistics to manage in a small amount of time, but because we're all aware of it, and because we recognize its value, it goes off without a hitch.

Give Your Stuff Away Day is not a government program. Let's keep it citizen-based, and let the government solve bigger problems. But let's also be responsible by:

- informing our local municipalities of our intent to participate;
- asking local governments for a waiver to ordinances that might prohibit this activity;
- placing at our curbs only items that others could use;
- retrieving items not picked up within a couple of days.

Want to help?

- Share this article with family and friends.
- Write a small article or letter to the editor.
- Contact your local government and let them know you plan to participate.
- Post your free items on craigslist.org or freecycle.org.
- Bring unwanted items to Goodwill stores year-round.
- On regular trash days, place good items to the left of trash, to make them easy for others to spot.
- Help sponsor Give Your Stuff Away Day.
- Have fun on May 15th, and stop by if you need a toaster.

Learn More

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