

Chili resident: Give it away, and save the day



More about Mike Morone

Age: 52

Home: Born in Rochester; lives in Chili

Family: Wife, Kris; daughters, Nicole and Alyssa; son, Charlie

Job: Extended learning specialist in tutoring operations for Global Partnerships in Rochester

Why he's in the news

Former city school teacher Mike Morone is a guy who hates waste — of all kinds. On his first day of teaching in the city school district in 1997, he was given 35 new computers to set up. The kids asked for the old ones, which the district didn't need, but Morone discovered he couldn't give them away. With wheels in motion, he asked businesses for surplus equipment that he could fix up, which he did in his living room and garage, and gave them to kids. Waste not, and the kids want not. And, long story short, this is how he came to promoting recycling by establishing Give Your Stuff Away Day, scheduled for Saturday, May 15.

How he came up with it

Morone is fascinated by "used stuff." Junk, if you will. Treasure, if you will. He once waded through a garbage disposal unit at a suburban school district — iri work clothes — and fished out gymnastics mats, worth \$1,000 if he sold them, he said, but priceless in keeping them. "My kids played hundreds of hours," he said. Since then, he's kept his eyes peeled on the junk piles people put out for trash pickup. One day, eureka! "I thought, 'Why don't we separate the good stuff from the trash, just put it a little to the left for the scavengers, like me,'" he said. And a random thought turned into what he hopes becomes a worldwide movement.

Here's how it works

Your waist is living the high life of 2010, but your heart holds out hope for the pair of circa-1980s Guess jeans that even Brooke Shields couldn't squeeze back into. Whatever it is you're hopelessly holding onto, it's junk to you if you're not using it, he said. But it might be something someone else desperately needs. So in honor of Give Your Stuff Away Day, lug your stuff — not trash, not recyclables, not illegal or dangerous items, but good stuff you don't need anymore — to the curb a few days ahead of time. People get free stuff. Children in your household are exposed to the idea of recycling. All that stuff at the curb doesn't wind up in a landfill. Your home is a little less cluttered — unless you find something you need.

Will it work?

Well, he said, many municipalities have ordinances that limit the days you can bring trash to the curb. But, he believes, they will save money in the long haul with less stuff to pick up. According to his Web site, www.giveyourstuffaway.com, the governor of Connecticut has endorsed the idea. New York Gov. David Paterson, who did not respond to his e-mail, might have more important fiscal matters on his mind. Eradicating the culture of waste Americans live in has to come from the citizens, Morone said. "I really want this to be a citizen-based movement, and I want the whole world to do it," he said. "I just like to help people, and I think this would be a cool way to help people."

— Mike Murphy



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Posted by John Wilkie on May 07, 2010 at 10:15 AM

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