

# Grand opening held for New Paltz ReUse Center

by MIKE TOWNSHEND on Nov 5, 2012 • 5:00 pm 1 Comment



Last Wednesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony commemorating the grand opening of the New Paltz ReUse Building located at the New Paltz Recycling Center on Clearwater Road. (photo by Lauren Thomas)

Recycling fanatics, DIY'ers and artists have a little something to feel good about. The Town of New Paltz staged a grand opening for their new ReUse Center last week. The 2,000-square-foot steel structure sits at the back of the Transfer Station lot down at the end of Clearwater Road.

Inside the big green building are shelves filled with everything from old picture frames, phone cords, gift wrapping tubes, old lamps, windows, kitchen tiles and large spools. All those items on the shelves are potentially things that could have gone in the landfill.

For Laura Petit, New Paltz's town recycling coordinator, having saved those items so people can reuse them means a lot. But the

ReUse Center also didn't get built in a day. Students from SUNY New Paltz volunteered to help build the structure. People atoning for past misdeeds also helped — court-ordered laborers from the Ulster County Community Service Program moved the recycled items from trailers into the new center.

But New Paltz also didn't go it alone in paying for the \$132,000 structure either. "This would not have happened if it wasn't for EPA and DEC funding," Petit said.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation paid for 50 percent of the building's cost, while the town picked up the other half. The feds put down money for educational programming and staff at the ReUse Center.

Kimiko Link, a scientist with the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 2 office, was on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. New Paltz is unique because it's one of only 13 communities participating in the EPA's Zero Waste initiative.

"EPA is thrilled about the opening of this center. We feel that this center really demonstrates a cornerstone of New Paltz's zero waste action plan." Link said. "We hope this serves as a model for all the other surrounding communities."

Kelly Drummond, the recycling coordinator for SUNY New Paltz, noted that the ReUse Center has some implications for cash-strapped students too.

"I think this could be a really great asset to the campus and the community," Drummond said. "With different art majors this could be really great. They could use the tiles for a mosaic or make a cool sculpture out of the items in there."

Many of the recycled or rescued items in the center seem perfect for a Cub Scout, Girl Scout or school craft project — or for an art student trying to blend a desire for sustainability with the avant-garde.

Supervisor Susan Zimet said opening the center showed a lot of commitment on the community's part. "This is living proof of New Paltz's dedication to sustainability. This is it — right here, right now," the supervisor said.

The ReUse Center has already been a sort of unexpected boon for the town. Department heads have used the center like a department store, scavenging for useful items they would have otherwise had to purchase brand-new with taxpayer money. For instance, the New Paltz Police Department recently took three bookcases from Clearwater Road to use at the station, Zimet said.

"If that's not a change in thought process or a change in how we do business on a government level, I don't know what is," she added. "This building's amazing. What's in here's amazing."

Right now, there are a lot of classes planned at the center — including one about how to give carbon-neutral gifts. The ReUse Center also accepts computers and e-waste.

For more about the center and what it offers, head to [www.newpaltzreuse.org](http://www.newpaltzreuse.org).