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Building material gratefully accepted

Re-Use Center assists charities

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COVINGTON - A new store called the Covington Re-Use Center is doing good by going green.

The store goes green by selling unwanted donated building materials. It does good by directing profits to two non-profit agencies housed in the same building - Care Net and Beverly's Closet.

"The bulk of the materials are donated from individuals and contractors, as well as the big-box stores and manufacturers and working with the two other re-use stores in Cincinnati," said Gary Dawson, one of the store's owners. "We will sometimes have to pay the freight to get an item such as carpeting from a mill in New Jersey, but we do not actually purchase the materials."

Dawson and his business partner, Margie Alford, leased the building and converted it from factory use to multi-tenant that includes for-profit and non-profit businesses.

Dawson said a re-use center fit the building well. In addition to the non-profits, the 105,000-square-foot building houses 10 building contractors. He tried to get an existing center to expand into the space, but was unable to get a commitment.

"We had many, many meetings about it and realized it was a great fit for the contractors and the neighborhood. We talked to enough other people and just did it ourselves."

Dawson said business has been better than expected.

"We have been open for six weeks and we were able after our first month to give a percentage of our income to Care Net and to continue to provide rent-free space to Beverly's Closet," he said.

That first check was useful to Care Net, a crisis pregnancy center.

"They've just started, but the amount they gave last month paid for our utility bill, so it was very helpful," said Kathleen Kiely. "They are very faith-filled people and we're a ministry so we line up terrifically together."

Beverly's Closet provides interview clothing for women job-seekers.

Dawson said that while about 60 percent of the material in landfills comes from construction, there are only about 70 re-use centers in the United States.

The Covington Re-Use Center is at 315 E. 15th St.

"The store is open to anyone, including organizations, individuals who are rehabbing, contractors and those who are just looking to go green," Dawson said.

