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At ReStore, everyone wins

By Liz McGathey, Staff Writer

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Doing your part to help others in need has just gotten easier and this time, philanthropy comes with perks.

A South Collin County Habitat for Humanity ReStore is celebrating its grand opening at 1400 Summit Avenue in Plano. ReStore is a retail outlet where quality used and surplus new building materials are sold to the public at below normal retail prices. Proceeds from ReStore sales provide funding for Habitat-built homes and help cover Habitat affiliates' overhead costs.

Gary Sharpsteen, director of the ReStore, said the outlet stores have been around for about 15 years, the first of which was opened in Austin. The Plano location will be the only one in the county.

Merchandise sold by a ReStore is usually donated from building supply stores, manufacturers, contractors and individuals who just want to help out. Generally, the donated items are not necessarily used — they've just been on display such as in a model home.

"We just got \$75,000 worth of brand, new high-end tile, granite, travertine..." Sharpsteen said. "They're in small quantities but they're good quality."

The merchandise is sold at about half the retail prices so in addition to getting a good bargain, customers are helping their community.

In addition to raising funds, ReStores help the environment by re-channeling usable materials that might otherwise fill up the landfill.

"The City of Plano is going to feature us in the water bills because we do help recycle," Sharpsteen said.

He said the ReStore channels as much money as possible into Habitat for Humanity by depending mostly on volunteers to run the store. Right now, volunteers are limited and Sharpsteen hopes to reach about 30 ready-and-willing helpers. They are looking for volunteers who can serve as cashiers, phone operators, greeters, stockers, drivers, public relations and marketing specialist, display builders, coordinators and store sales associates.

They are also accepting donations of sellable items and needs for day-to-day operations. Current needs include a truck, pallet jacks, shopping carts, a forklift, display racks and general operating items.

To donate or volunteer, call Sharpsteen at 972-398-0634 or 469-877-1156.

ReStore is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and closed Sunday through Monday.

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