

Citizens Against the Landfill in Hempstead (CALH)  
Monthly 'more than a' Garage Sale

*(Or why we aren't open every weekend. And what it takes to get our Garage Sale up and running once a month so that every penny goes to pay for the fight to stop Pintail Landfill)*

1. Schwarz Hardware has donated the space/building and electricity (heat/AC) for us to hold the sale. This is absolutely free to CALH.
2. Our 'more than a' garage sale store is run strictly on donations from you, the community, and sometimes from our 'out of town' family members, supporters and friends who are aware of our needs. We are constantly asking and reminding everyone to please drop off your gently used and new items via Facebook, e-blasts, newspaper stories, word-of-mouth. Some people are now in the routine of dropping off donations on a monthly basis. Most of us have donation items in our personal vehicles at all times, either picking up or delivering, and we almost never say 'no' to any donation (past experience has taught us to say 'no' to old televisions and mattresses). We are always thinking of where to find more merchandise and what other items we could sell or ways to make money.
3. Drop offs by the community are accepted by the amazing employees at Schwarz Hardware, from 9-5 on weekdays and 9-noon on Saturdays. They will either take the items into their store or open up the shop space and allow drop offs inside. This has been arranged to make it easier and more convenient for you to drop off donations.
4. A week or so after each sale, we start talking about the next one. A date for the next sale is set when the most people are available to help. Emails go out asking who can do what and when, and often not everyone can work both days of the sale. Once a date is set, a flyer is designed and shared via FB, e-blast, newspapers, then flyers are printed (by a generous donor) and distributed around the community by hard-working volunteers.
5. Sometimes, as we begin to prepare for a sale, we panic and think there won't be anything to sell at the next sale. Then you, the public, hear the call and the donations start pouring in. Again, phone calls and emails are sent out to volunteers, organizing who can come in and sort, clean, fold, place, move the items? This starts to happen about three weeks before the sale weekend. The first week, we work about two days and the second week, we work about three days. The week before the sale, we

work every day, except we may take a break on Wednesday if our progress is going well. We try to put donations in the back room as they arrive, but things end up all over the store and in the aisle ways. Often items need to be cleaned or dusted, and then every single item must be tagged/priced, classified into a department and then someone has to take it there.

6. The store is usually still in total chaos at the beginning of the third week but the work is fun, if hard and a little stressful. We do wonder how we are going to make it all presentable on time. We want it to be so inviting to everyone that visits and beautiful at the same time. There is usually some heavy lifting for the men to do, perhaps nails to be put up for hanging pictures and other odd jobs, and we are very fortunate to have some really handy men and women in our group. Often we are asked to pick up items from people's homes or businesses, so someone uses their truck and/or trailer to make these pickups. We are usually hopping over boxes on the floor to get from one side of the store to the other but some of us think of it as good exercise!
7. Nice/unusual items arrive and a couple of the creative visionaries in our group begin to have a spark of an idea as to the theme of the store for the month. Some magic seems to happen next as most of us are in awe of this planning stage and just see a disorganized mess. With a vision in mind, we all get to work to make the plan a reality; sometimes areas of the store will have their own feel or colors, and we will start bringing collections of items together. We become more cohesive and are a little army by this time, as we begin to see the clearing of the floor and a clearing picture of how our store will look for the next sale, as each sale is different. Photos are taken around this time to post in our FB Album and on craigslist. Finishing touches in preparation for sale day are made in every department. While someone vacuums, another cleans off the checkout counter and prepares shopping bags, bubble wrap, wrapping paper, others will put out signs at pre-determined road intersections around town. The stress begins to let up and, proud of ourselves, we look around at what we have accomplished. The store looks amazing. Hard work pays off. We lock up, knowing we are ready for customers at 8 a.m. the next day and hoping that you will have seen our ad in the local papers, flyer in a business, or post on Facebook.
8. Meanwhile, many of these same people go home on 'garage sale eve' to baking for the bake sale, or placing last minute photos on various social media sites, or maybe they are still researching the value of an unusual

donation, getting cash boxes ready, or setting out items needed for the sale the next day.

9. How many people does it take on to run the two day sale each month? First thing on sale day morning, it is all hands on deck to get items, often big and heavy, from inside to the outside, sidewalk sale. Then we must set up the bake sale area with incoming baked goods, and put finishing touches on various displays. Often we have a crowd waiting for us to open at 8 a.m. and we have to be ready for a rush. Our sign spinner sets up his signs and tent in readiness to attract customers as they drive by. We have at least two people at the checkout counter, sometimes three. Two people run the jewelry department. Someone needs to be in charge of the bake sale table. About 7-8 volunteers are on the floor, helping people find things, sizes, taking items to the front checkout and putting them in a bin so customers have free hands to do more shopping. Having handled the merchandise for several days or weeks, some of us are very familiar with our inventory and can find just about anything you might ask for. We also have a head designer who is watching what is sold and replacing items to make the store look fresh and interesting while you are shopping away. Clothes are constantly being replaced while you shop, they are color coded and sized on the racks.

Outside there are usually three people handling sales on the sidewalk as well as helping customers load their vehicles. Our very dedicated sign spinner attracts customers all day long on both Friday and Saturday, rain, sleet, hail, fog or shine.

Let us not forget our nourishment during the day – someone usually brings donuts for the morning, a coffee maker is brought from home and sometimes lunch is delivered/donated or we leave in shifts on a short lunch break. One kind volunteer often serves a homemade lunch to workers on Saturday which is such a treat.

10. Anything not sold at the end of the day has to be brought back into the store, more heavy lifting and teamwork...and finally some very tired workers lock up and go home, realizing that the combination of hard work from a group of volunteers on a mission and a generous community spirit, together have made another miraculous sale.