

Recovery in the News

Green Demolitions helps rebuild lives

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The Connecticut Post Online
June 18, 2007

The plumber at the sink pulled out the flexible pipe, the electrician on a ladder removed lights and drills whirred to take apart cabinets as a ballet of demolition and reconstruction swirled through the kitchen.

Andy Smith, construction manager of Green Demolitions, was playing a main role in the performance as his crew, which included his son, Alex, disassembled cabinets and carted off the luxury appliances from the lower Fairfield County home.

Those appliances and cabinets won't be headed for a landfill. Instead, Green Demolitions will resell them and use the proceeds to help addicts recover their lives. The resale isn't a one-time event. Green Demolitions rescues items such as doors, cabinets and counters, packs them off to one of its three stores — including the newest one in Bridgeport — reconditions and then sells them, giving about 82 cents per dollar to All Addicts Anonymous programs.

"We've got three jobs going on today," Smith said after setting down a slab of marble. This is Green Demolitions' busy season, with many people doing renovations.

William Fieber, president of the Fieber Group of New Canaan, is running Wednesday's renovation job; it was his decision to bring Green Demolition into the project.

"Coincidentally, we're taking out the kitchen we installed," Fieber said. Fieber said Green Demolitions sent an inspector to look at the kitchen to gauge any resale value, and then set up an appointment to remove the cabinets and the appliances.

"This is the fifth time in three months we worked with them," said Fieber, whose grandfather William started the business in 1935. In addition to new constructions, his company is hired for a lot of teardowns, where appliances and materials could be recycled. "We've taken down castles," Fieber said.

It was about five years ago at the site of the demolition of an Old-World-style castle in Greenwich that Steve Feldman came up with the idea for Green Demolitions.

Feldman, a recovering addict and New Yorker, said he was looking for a way to help other addicts when he found himself standing at the entrance to an old estate, looking at the leveled rubble. The idea popped into his head: There was probably a lot of valuable stuff in that mansion that just got thrown out or destroyed.

Green Demolitions is the donation program for Feldman's Greenwich-based Recovery Unlimited, which uses the money raised from sales to fund addiction recovery programs aimed at healing the entire family, he said.

His organization, which also has retail stores in Bethel, N.Y., and Honesdale, Pa., provided more than \$400,000 in funding for programs last year.

Feldman said opening in Bridgeport last month made a lot of sense, because the community is up and coming and the store location is nearly perfect.

Green Demolitions shares 3380 Fairfield Ave. with Measure for Measure LLC, a homebuilder that also sells environmentally friendly products. The building is near the highway in the Black Rock section, where people can shop for luxury kitchens at discount rates while maybe hitting a restaurant or two, Feldman said.

In his showroom, Feldman shows off a stainless steel kitchen, complete with Thermador Range and Sub-Zero refrigerator, the company pulled out of a New York townhouse. It would have sold for about \$24,000 new, he said, but Green Demolitions is selling it for \$9,500. The store is also stocked with doors, cabinets, chandeliers and a new refrigerator/oven that can be remotely operated via computer. Feldman said a person could put a chicken in there in the morning and before leaving the office, he or she could send his oven a message to heat the bird up; dinner would be ready by the time the person got home.

Prices range from 50 to 70 percent off the retail cost when the item was new, he said.

According to Feldman, there are a number of reasons why Green Demolitions is gaining popularity.

Not only can customers buy a \$24,000 kitchen for half price, he said, but donors can help people get their lives back while keeping usable equipment out of landfills and saving the removal and disposal costs.

But Feldman said he has another reason to personally feel good about Green Demolitions: He hopes it will grow to a point where his addiction recovery services will no longer be dependent upon direct donations, but can be fueled almost exclusively through the sale of recovered materials.

Visit www.greendemolitions.org for donation information and www.greendemolitions.com for buying opportunities.

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