



# THE CARLETONIAN



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## Free & For Sale Frenzy Offers On-Campus Thrift Shop

BY [KATY GILBERTSON](#) ON APRIL 20, 2018

This past Sunday, April 15, the Sustainability Office held its first-ever “Free and For Sale Frenzy.” Over 100 students donated approximately 1,200 clothing and accessory items.

Donors named their price and then shoppers paid for the items either through Venmo accounts or by giving cash to the volunteers working the event, who then delivered the payment to individual sellers’ mailboxes.

Fifteen garbage bags’ worth of clothing remained unpurchased and unretrieved at the end of the event, said Alex Miller, Sustainability Program Coordinator. The office plans to donate this remaining clothing to a combination of the GSC’s Trans Clothing Closet, the Carleton Clothing Connection, and Carleton’s Lighten Up garage sale.

The idea for the Free and For Sale Frenzy came from Sustainability Assistant Caroline Hall ’20. In the fall, she attended a Students for Zero Waste conference in Philadelphia, where students from the University of Pittsburgh gave a presentation about the pop-up thrift shop they run on campus.

“The idea kind of stemmed from my frustrations with the Free and For Sale Facebook page—I’d always really want something, and then someone would take it, or there would be a bunch of people in line already,” said Hall. “So I thought, why don’t we have a one-time event, where everyone can be in one place to sell and buy each other’s clothes, and everyone can switch up their wardrobe. Like a Facebook event in one place.”

“We know that there’s this culture of people swapping clothes, people getting together to do this, organically happening,” said Miller. “So we thought why don’t we, the Sustainability Office, provide a venue?”

Hall partnered with Natalie Jacobson ’18, Sustainability Assistant and Special Events Coordinator, to put on the event. The office was busy with Climate Action Week in the winter,



the project was pushed to spring, explained Miller.

On the day of the Frenzy, sellers arrived with items and were instructed to fill out a Google Form for each piece. Then they attached stickers to the clothing with their name, payment method, and asking price. The items were then arranged by size and type of clothing.

The Sustainability Office did not profit from the event. “It was just exchange between people,” said Miller. The event was run by Hall and Jacobson, and staffed by volunteers from both the Sustainability Office and Students Organized for the Protection of the Environment. “We couldn’t have done it without the volunteers,” noted Hall.

Hall, Jacobson and Miller agree that the Sustainability Office is likely to run this event again next year. “I think it’ll definitely happen again,” said Hall. “I’d say it was overall a success. And now that we’ve tried it out, we know what works and what doesn’t work.”

“We had a few small bumps in the road,” said Hall. Some students were missing a few dollars in cash, she said, and some items ended up lost and unaccounted for. Those lost items were either stolen or mistakenly unaccounted for during the inventory process, said Jacobson. For next year, Miller imagines dedicating more space and time to set-up, and instituting a better tracking system, she said.

“Everything went really well. Super busy, which is a good problem to have,” said Miller. “The weather was definitely an issue, but people still turned out. So I think that shows that it’s a need on campus.” Jacobson noted that there were significantly more sellers than buyers, a disparity she attributed to the snowstorm.

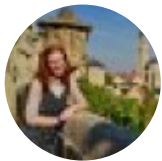
Hall mentioned the Friday, March 30 Convocation talk by the Post-Landfill Action Network, noting that one of her goals was to challenge the economy’s linear consumption model. “The linear consumption model is the idea that you buy an item and then when you’re done with it, or decide you’re tired of it, you throw it away and it goes to the landfill,” she said. “We wanted to reconfigure that so that students, when they’re done with items, can sell them to another student to use. So it’s basically encouraging reusing items and recycling clothing in your closet to be used for someone else rather than just throwing it away.”

“A college campus is a great site for a sharing economy,” added Jacobson. The Free and For Sale Frenzy was a means to “interrupt traditional ways of consuming,” she said. “Part of what our office tries to do is always reach out beyond our choir,” said Miller.

“Not just the typical student who might be into sustainability or living a sustainable lifestyle. Everyone loves saving money, everyone has extra clothes in their closet they don’t wear, and it’s a great way to promote reuse on campus, and reducing your waste, without having to necessarily tie a sustainability bow on top of it. I’m a fan of events like this, and the Repair Fair, that don’t scream sustainability but are encouraging sustainability principles underneath them.”

“A lot of people didn’t know that the Sustainability Office was hosting it or they didn’t understand why,” said Hall. “I reached out to a lot of students who are into fashion and clothes and shopping who don’t always think about that necessarily. It was a really cool way to get people into reusing and reducing clothing waste without even thinking about it!”

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**Katy Gilbertson**

Editor-in-chief.

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