

# Creating a Culture of Reuse

Presented by Madeline James  
Reuse Store Consultant  
[madelinebonniejean@gmail.com](mailto:madelinebonniejean@gmail.com)



## Shifting our perspective on thrift

- ▶ For profit
- ▶ Non profit
- ▶ Vintage shops
- ▶ eCommerce
- ▶ Consignment



THE BUYERARCHY  
of NEEDS

# Obstacles For Reuse

## For Shoppers

- ▶ Stigma- it's for poor people
- ▶ Uncertainty- not sure if they'll have the thing I need

## For Donors

- ▶ They've tried to donate, but have had donations turned away
- ▶ Rumors about what happens with the revenue from their donations
- ▶ Confusion/concern about what happens to your stuff- Does it get recycled? Does it get sold overseas? Does it go in the garbage?

“Thrift shops are for poor people. If I shop there I am getting things that were meant for folks less fortunate than me.”



2 million tons of clothes are donated annually in the United States for reuse/recycling. Only 25% of what ends up in thrift stores actually gets sold. There is simply not enough domestic demand for this huge quantity of clothes.

# Opportunities

- ▶ Thrift is becoming more professional and mainstream
- ▶ 56% of Americans say they would give second hand gifts
- ▶ Konmari Craze may be a fad, but thrift can leverage the donation influx
- ▶ 87 percent of individuals who bought secondhand clothing online shifted their spending away from off-price retailers

Percent of annual revenue growth 2008-2017 Used  
v. New Retail Sales







  
**CASCADE ALLIANCE**  
[cascadealliance.org](http://cascadealliance.org)

Support  
provided by



Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

**Sustainable Work.  
Stronger Communities.**

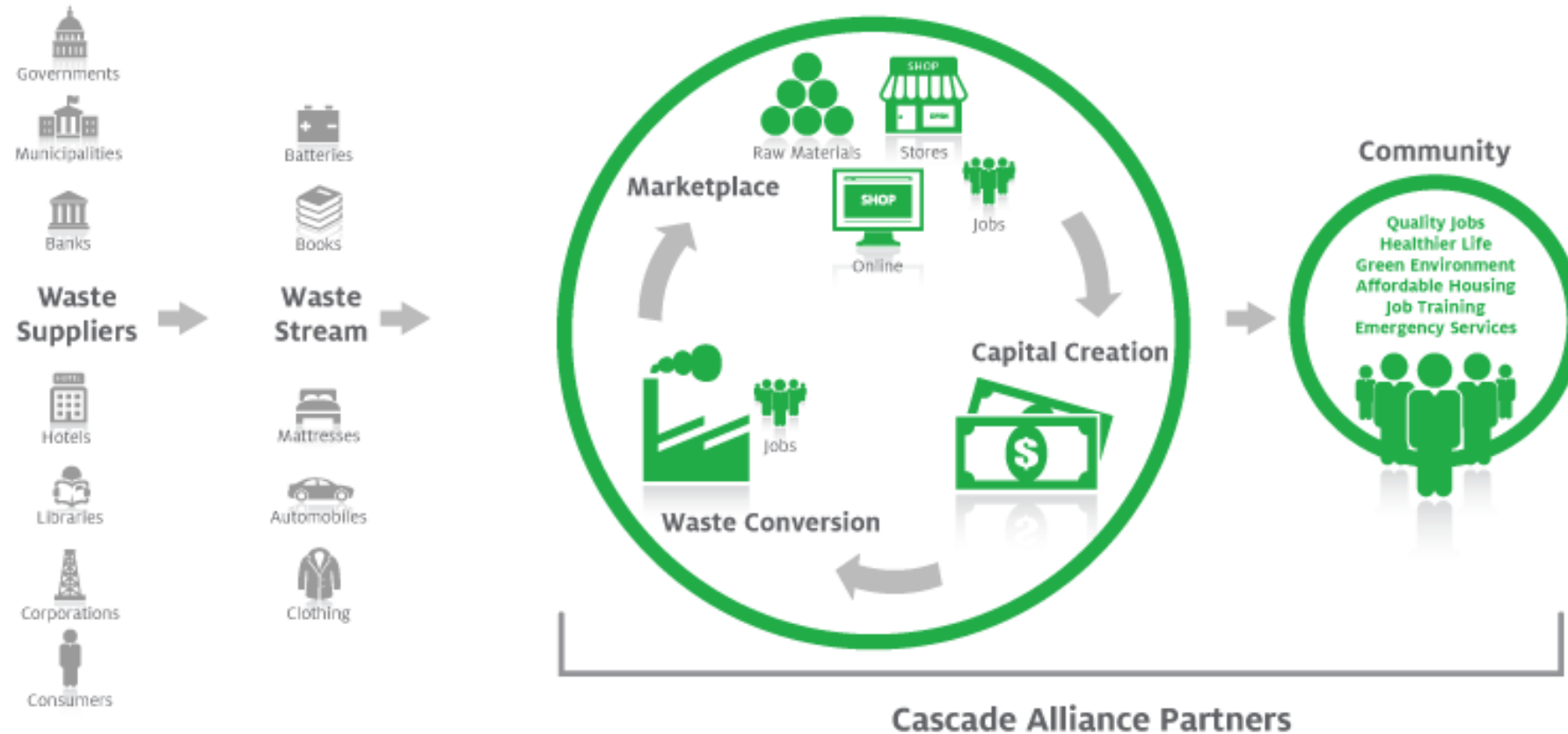


*“A mission-driven business will always fail.  
What we do is a business-driven mission.”*

—Terry McDonald, SVdP

- ▶ **Economic** → revenue generation to fund social programs; reduced disposal costs
- ▶ **Employment** → training and jobs for individuals with barriers to employment
- ▶ **Environmental** → reduction in the amount of items and materials sent to landfills
- ▶ **Community** → quality items at affordable prices; strengthened community well-being and economy; enhanced corporate citizenship

## FROM WASTE TO JOBS AND GREENER HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES





## Obstacles

- ▶ Fast fashion is the reuse industry's equivalent to contamination in the recycling industry
- ▶ Cost of scaling—new equipment, bailers, forklifts, warehouse space



THE SCRAP  
EXCHANGE

1991 **28** 2019  
YEARS

CREATIVE REUSE ARTS CENTER / DURHAM NC

WE  
COLLECT ...

YOU  
CREATE





# Promoting community, creativity, and environmental awareness through reuse since 1991

- ▶ 1800 sqft mixed use facility
- ▶ Offers unique, hard to find low cost resource the community
- ▶ Retail store voted Best Fabric Store in the Triangle region
- ▶ Workshops, Classes, Events, Open Studio Space
- ▶ Artist Exhibition and Services
- ▶ Collection Service
- ▶ Cultural retail entertainment destination location serving over 200,000 people a year





# REUSE ARTS DISTRICT

The Scrap Exchange now has 105,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 12.5 acres to create a Reuse Arts District.





# Links and Resources

- ▶ [Scrapexcchange.org](https://www.scrapexcchange.org)
- ▶ [Cascadealliance.org](https://www.cascadealliance.org)
- ▶ [The State of the Retail Thrift Industry, 3rd Edition](#)
- ▶ [U.S. Census Bureau](#), Monthly Retail Trade Report
- ▶ [Robert Wood Johnson Case Study](#) 2019