

# cycle of life

Giving old items a new life, and helping raise money for charity, is all in a day's work for Sarah Herring.



Upcycling second-hand furniture and accessories isn't a new idea. But the charitable spin put on the process by Resene and Sarah Herring makes it different.

As part of Resene's work in the community, it asks Sarah to choose an item from a Salvation Army Family Store and add value by refurbishing it. She then returns the item to the store for sale. The initiative is called Upcycling for Good. Sarah also documents the process with step-by-step photographs and instructions, which are featured on the *habitat* by Resene website ([www.habitatbyresene.com/tips](http://www.habitatbyresene.com/tips)).

She has upcycled all manner of things, from furniture and jars to magazine racks and suitcases. It's a skill she honed when creating a DIY column syndicated to various national newspapers, some of which were sponsored by Resene. When the column wrapped up, this new opportunity came along.

Says Resene marketing manager Karen Warman: "We have been working with the Salvation Army for a number of years on various programmes, including Hunger for Colour where we encourage customers to bring in a can of food in exchange for a Resene testpot. With the trend to upcycling, we got discussing the Salvation Army stores and what a great resource they are for furniture, accessories and other items that just need a fresh lick of paint or wood stain to make them as good as new. Often people get stuck for ideas, so we thought why not do up some items to provide some easy project ideas, then return the upcycled item for the Salvation Army store to sell."











The Salvation Army Family Store in Botany Downs, Auckland, is Sarah's hunting ground. "I try to choose something unique. I never have a grand plan, but know



**Far left:** One of Sarah's most memorable projects was this desk which she stripped back and decorated in an elegant chevron pattern, using Resene Alabaster and Resene Colorwood Bark wood stain.

**Left:** Simple crates with a fun pattern using Resene Sea Green, Resene ASAP, Resene Palm Green and Resene Hopbush.

**Above right:** An Art Deco motif revitalises an old tray with the help of metallic paints Resene Copperhead and Resene Solid Gold as well as Resene Dawn Chorus and Resene Rascal.

-  Resene Rascal
-  Resene Solid Gold
-  Resene ASAP
-  Resene Hopbush
-  Resene Colorwood Bark
-  Resene Copperhead
-  Resene Dawn Chorus
-  Resene Palm Green
-  Resene Alabaster
-  Resene Sea Green



I can do something. It's quite organic. I have a brainstorm with myself, and often go into my local Resene ColorShop in Pukekohe to bounce ideas off staff and to get guidance on the best type of products to use.

"The Family Store team gets right behind it. The staff often put items aside for me. I give them a before-and-after poster to display with the item when I take it back, they photograph the display and put it on Facebook. The pieces usually sell super-fast, which is gratifying."

It's also gratifying for the Salvation Army, according to the National Family Store Manager Gareth Marshall. "Our Family Stores are full of treasures generously donated by members of the public. We value these donations and try our hardest to re-purpose and sell as much as possible.

"We're all about re-using and recycling, so teaming up with Resene on Upcycling for Good was a perfect match. Resene's products and tips are a natural fit with our pre-loved furniture and accessories, which are usually great quality but could sometimes do with a lick of paint to ensure they fly off the shelves.

"Each year, nationally, our 132 stores save 16,000 tonnes from landfill. This initiative increases the value of the donated product, improves the range of goods for our customers, and furthers the Salvation Army's mission and Resene's community activity. We're proud to partner with Resene and work on these win-win initiatives."

Sarah likes the sustainability aspect. "There's a place for fast, cheap trends but I get such satisfaction with giving something another home and life." It's also a great bonding experience for Sarah and her four-year-old son Milo. "He loves to paint alongside me, and he often comes to the Resene ColorShop and The Salvation Army Family Store with me."

"I've become more confident as I understand the Resene products more. There are so many non-traditional surfaces you can paint. I remember the day I discovered Resene Waterborne Smooth Surface Sealer [which provides a key for non-porous surfaces]."

While the most often asked question is 'won't you run out of ideas', Sarah believes that as long as there are unique and individual pieces, there will be new ideas. "The projects can't be too ambitious or scary; they need to be relatable and fun. I hope I can inspire others to pick up a paint brush and give upcycling a go." **H**

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