

## ReStore celebrates five years

By RICHARD VIRGILIO

For five years, Coastal Habitat for Humanity's ReStore resale store has been part of the community – offering deals on furniture, appliances and housewares as well as serving as the major sustainable funding source for the organization's affordable housing mission.

On Sat., Feb. 4 ReStore celebrates its anniversary with discounts on every purchase. I spoke with Maureen Mulligan, Coastal Habitat's executive director about the ReStore and the role it plays in our community.

TBP: How did the ReStore come to be?

Mulligan: Seven years ago Coastal Habitat's board began researching the idea of a store – before thrift stores became a trend. Thelma Sessions and Al Gross spearheaded the planning to open a store, with the help of David Wright and Bob Tanzola.

It was so exciting that first day the store opened, looking out into the parking lot and seeing people waiting to come in the store to shop.

Everything was an unknown at that point – would we have customers, donors and volunteers to run the store? Five years later we are very thankful to everyone in the community for embracing the store.

TBP: How do sales from the ReStore impact the community?

Mulligan: Every dollar spent in the store supports the local community. The ReStore is Coastal Habitat's major source of sustainable income.

Coastal Habitat primarily builds homes in Asbury Park and Neptune because those towns are so supportive of us. We are part of the larger community, from Spring Lake to Bradley Beach to Ocean Township to Allenhurst, with our Neighborhood Revitalization Projects, which include Brush with Kindness where our volunteers paint the exterior of a home.

New for this year is Ramps and Rails – if anyone reading this knows of someone

who needs a ramp installed near the entrance to their home, please call us. We have volunteers hungry to help in the spring.

TBP: Five years later many of the same volunteer faces are still here at the store.

Maureen: The ReStore runs on volunteer energy.

Lorraine Davies is here 40 hours every week, overseeing the entire donation area. Lorraine touches many of the customers that come into the store, going out of her way to make sure special kids have Christmas and seniors make it to doctor's appointments.

TBP: Lorraine is a beautiful person inside and out and absolutely my favorite volunteer. Without Lorraine and Sue, the manager, the store would not be so fantastic.

Maureen: Joan, Mary and Andy are three other extra special volunteers.

Joan Merics is the ReStore's Ocean Grove connection, lobbying people in the community to donate as well as a reliable and wonderful volunteer at the store. Mary Fournier's knowledge about antiques is invaluable. She spends hours each week researching donations that might have special value or history. And Andy Pawlan, a local artist and woodworker, has been volunteering since Day One at the store, helping customers and restoring quality furniture donations.

TBP: Speaking of donations, everything in the store is donated by community members.

Maureen: Donations – financial and merchandise – are the bread and butter that supports Coastal Habitat's mission. The ReStore has diverted 1.3 million tons of waste from the landfills.

Follow the ReStore on Facebook (ReStore Coastal Habitat) for special bargain alerts, donation guidelines and more. For NRI information, call 732.974.2422.

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**Coaster Photo**  
**Coastal Habitat for Humanity's Executive Director, Maureen Mulligan, is pictured in the ReStore resale store on Third Avenue in Asbury Park.**