



Campus Race to Zero Waste 2023

Sustainable Clothing Collection and Thrift Shop

Hope College

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Focus of Case Study:

Our case study focuses on collecting clothing items from students during March and the subsequent thrift shop we hosted, which diverts clothes from the landfill.

Detailed description of campaign or effort:

For the past three semesters, Green Hope has hosted a Pop-Up Thrift Shop on campus that sells items collected from students during the month preceding the event. The thrift shop takes place one evening on campus and sells all items to students for a dollar each. To make it easy for students, in collaboration with our Business Services office, we accept both cash and credit card for payment. We keep the price of items at one dollar because we wanted to be financially accessible for students because we know that sustainable fashion can sometimes be too expensive for many. In order to have enough clothes for the event to be successful, clothes are collected from across campus – focusing on residence halls – and advertising is pushed across campus and on social media to strongly encourage students to donate as much as possible. Each semester this event has grown by collecting more clothes, attracting more volunteers and students shopping at the event, and earning more profit. All of our profit was donated to Hope's newly created Green Revolving Fund.

To collect the clothes, large cardboard boxes were placed in each residence hall during March 2023, along with a poster explaining acceptable items to donate. Additionally, a few boxes were placed in other buildings across campus, including the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Student Center. This allows students who live off campus or in apartments to drop off any clothes as well. Student volunteers were assigned different locations to monitor, and when bins were full they contacted one of the organizers of the event, who then brought the clothes to a location in the Student Life area to store them until the event.

Advertising was done using posters in the residence halls, word of mouth (especially by Green Hope members), social media, and through the weekly campus events email sent to all students. Because the collection was done within the month including spring break, advertisements especially pushed for students to do spring cleaning in their closets at home over break, and then to bring back clothes to donate to the sale that they no longer wanted. Overall, this event encourages sustainable fashion by asking for donations of items no longer wanted by students and then offering them at an affordable price to other students who find items they love.

Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- February: Planning logistics, finalizing dates, gathering a committed group of student volunteers, communicating with necessary offices to gain permission to use campus spaces to collect clothes and host the event, and designing posters and promotional materials
- March 1: Place donation boxes around campus in residence halls and student life spaces
- March: Advertising that we are collecting donations and hosting a thrift event
- March: Individual volunteers check in on boxes every couple of days and notify leaders if a box is full and needs to be emptied, boxes emptied by Green Hope leaders as needed
- March 31: The rest of the donations are collected and boxes are removed from campus locations
- April 2: Sorting donations with a dozen volunteers
- April 3: Final preparations for the thrift shop event and hosting the actual thrift event
- mid-April: Sorting the leftover clothes and donating to community groups and saving some for future events

Resources and stakeholders involved:

We were supported by the Hope College Office of Sustainability, Hope Advocates for Sustainability, the Hope College Physical Plant, and Hope College Business Services. We had volunteers to monitor the collection bins, which were typically members of Green Hope. Members of Green Hope also volunteered for the event itself, both sorting clothes and running the shop. Boxes from previous years were used for collection in addition to recycled boxes leftover from the Student Life Office. Hangers and clothing racks were purchased for the first time, totaling around \$50.

Describe the Results of this campaign component:**General results:**

This campaign attracted engagement across campus, as collection bins were placed in residence halls and student life spaces. It's hard to track the number of people engaged because unknown students filled bins with their clothes, but we collected a total of more than one thousand items across campus. Then, more than one hundred people shopped at the pop-up event, with many standing in line outside the doors to shop as soon as the doors were opened. Even those who do not normally engage with the Office of Sustainability or environmental organizations were excited about this event and participated by either donating clothes or shopping second-hand from the donations. After the event, more than 40 pairs of jeans were donated to Madewell, which partners with a company to recycle denim into housing materials for communities in need. Additionally, we sorted the leftover items, donating about half of the unsold items to "Donations of Hope," an annual end-of-semester effort that collects items across campus to donate to a Holland area thrift store. Unsellable items and undergarments were sent in a donation bag to "For Days," a company that recycles scraps of clothing. Some items were kept to resell at future events and possibly use at an upcycling art event next fall semester. Not only was this Green Hope's most well-attended event of the semester, but it was also the one most highly anticipated by students.

Specific measurable impact:

- \$375 was fundraised and donated to Hope College's Green Revolving Fund, which supports sustainable projects on campus
- An estimated 175 students shopped at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop

Type of Item	Number of Items
Shoes	26
Hats	26
Scarves	7
Misc Accessories	12
Tshirts	138
short sleeve shirts	81
tank tops	72
sweaters	91
flannel/button	28
cardigan	26
long sleeve shirts	115
crewnecks/hoodies	83
coats/jackets	53
dresses/rompers	67
shorts	42
hair accessories	4
pants	204
gloves	2
skirts	8
bags	10
jewelry	4
under/swim	8
TOTAL	1107

- Over 1000 items were donated by students (see chart for specifics)

What would you do differently in the future?

In the future, we would love to expand this effort as much as possible. First, we hope to have more clothing racks and hangers to display all the items that we collected, which would better help these items find new homes. Additionally, we would like to have multiple days/times to shop, which would give more students a chance to attend the event. Finally, our dream for this shop is to have it become something more permanent. Someday, we would like to have a set space where students can drop off clothes and shop throughout the semester, perhaps a couple of times per week when other students are helping to operate it.

What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

For any group who were to hold a similar initiative in the future, our main advice would be to focus most strongly on advertising. Spreading the word is key to success - both in terms of collecting enough clothes and attracting enough students to the event itself. Try specifically to advertise to certain groups, such as sports teams, student organizations, sororities, or RAs. It is also important to have plenty of volunteers that are willing to help out and you can distribute tasks since this event can be quite a large undertaking for just a couple of people. Another piece of advice would be to put the collection boxes in places that are easily accessible to students so that donating is simple. It's also important to have a good storage space for all the clothes that is secure, large enough, and out of the way until the shop itself takes place. Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention the goal of this event. While raising some money for a good cause is certainly a great byproduct, the point of the event is not to make a profit. The goal is to bring students together to create a more sustainable campus, in which clothes are averted from ending up in landfills and instead find new homes. The thrift shop is also a great way to get in front of students who might not normally be familiar with sustainability since participating by donating or purchasing is an easy way for any student to engage with reducing waste and reusing items. On top of this, the event also brings awareness to the issues of fast fashion and provides an affordable alternative with low prices that are accessible to all.

Photos:

**Pop up thrift sale!!
Happening now!!!**



GREEN HOPE X HAS POP-UP

Thrift Shop

ALL
ITEMS
LESS
THAN
\$5



Madewell's

DENIM RECYCLING



40+
PAIRS
DONATED

GREEN HOPE DONATED
LEFTOVER DENIM FROM
THE POP-UP SHOPS

They will be recycled into housing
insulation for communities in need!

THANKS TO ALL WHO DONATED DENIM!

Donate Donate Donate!

Don't have clothes on campus that you want to donate? Remember to bring clothes back after spring break! Accepting donations until Friday, March 31.

ACCEPTING ALL:

- clothes
- shoes
- bags
- accessories



NOT ACCEPTING:

- socks
- underwear
- undergarments
- damaged items

Email greenhope@hope.edu with any questions or to get involved!