

LOO Wisdom for Rotary Auction

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Goal of the LOO

Maximize the diversion and reuse of Rotary Auction items that are still usable and cannot or will not be sold at auction

Objectives of the LOO

- 1) Create a dedicated space for the receipt from Rotary departments and sorting of items that cannot or will not be sold at auction
- 2) Create a dedicated space for categorizing and offering materials to rotary volunteers: free shopping to take and reuse LOO items
- 3) Facilitate the movement of materials to offsite nonprofit partners such as ARC, Buy Nothing Project, and others by sorting, organizing, and packing materials for pickup
- 4) Properly sort materials that cannot be used to recycling endpoints as possible
- 5) Have a super fun time doing 1-4!

LOO Methods:

1) Intake and sorting of materials from other departments

Each year the LOO creates and continually adapts a sorting station, where incoming carts from departments can be brought for sorting items to the LOO. Typically these are tented areas on the lawn just beyond the end of the eastern breezeway extending from the Woodward office. Tables, tents, and sufficient space for parking carts for unloading are necessary components.

LOO items come in from other departments primarily in three ways:

- a) Dedicated LOO volunteers (if there is capacity to do this) who go around to departments and pick up materials from those departments that are for the LOO
- b) Rotary department volunteers (again, as there is capacity) who bring items to the LOO
- c) Recycling team members who drop off items they find as they are making their rounds of the discard stations

Items are placed at the sorting area and gone through by volunteers, and they are generally sorted to the **LOO Shopping area, the Lawn of Opportunity, ARC packing pallets, or the textiles bin**. More on each of these items below.

2) Shopping part A: The LOO Shopping Center

Each year a LOO Shopping Center is set up to facilitate items being picked up by rotary volunteers. In addition, this becomes a secondary sorting area from which when bins get too full, they can be removed and packed up for harvesters.

The LOO Shopping Center is typically located just outside the breezeway east of the office, and consists of a series of tables on which blue bins are placed and labeled with the category of item they contain (e.g., office supplies, glassware, dishware, cards, toys, etc). A complete list of LOO categories for creating labels is available here (link to be established).

The LOO is open for the duration of the intake period for anyone to shop and items remaining at the end are cleared, packed for harvesters, and the area is completely cleared of all tables and bins on the last morning before the auction (preview night).

Shopping Part B: The Lawn of Opportunity

The Lawn of Opportunity is typically the grassy area past the Shopping Center and Intake Tents. This area is used for larger items that are also freely available but cannot or will not be sold at auction - e.g., pillows, rugs, lamps, and small appliances that are still functional.

Just like the Shopping Center this area is open to all rotarians and is also completely cleaned out and closed up prior to preview night. However, we will establish a “free hill” for preview night just to the right of the south lot entrance with materials from the LOO that we think are likely to be desirable. This was a hit in 2023, so we’ll try it again!

3) Facilitating movement of items to partners

A primary function of the LOO is to move materials to nonprofit partners. Generally this happens in two areas:

- the area behind the breezeway towards the school building is often used for storing boxes for pre-sale partners who come by during the intake period. These partners typically have identified specific materials they are looking for, we keep this list at the Green Team Desk, and LOO staff work to create piles/boxes of those materials and then reach out to the Green Team Desk to call the harvester for pickup as their boxes fill. (e.g., socks for homeless shelters; science equipment for science teachers)

- the area along the curb is used for two primary things:

-a series of pallets are set up that are stacked with boxes that get filled with LOO items for ARC . LOO volunteers are continually filling boxes throughout intake, typically with a) things of which we have too many in the Shopping Center (eg glassware, office supplies) and ditto for items from the lawn if they are acceptable by ARC.

-a pallet with a dedicated large box is placed along the curb for textile donations. As this fills, the Rotary forklift operator moves this around to the textiles department and brings an empty. Those textiles are sent to the dedicated textile truck that is staged behind the clothing dept out at the covered area behind the school.

4) Recycling and trashing: the lowest rung of the ladder

It is a reality that the LOO cannot save everything. There are items that cannot be rescued because they are of too poor quality or value to be worth sending to harvesters. In this case we:

- a) **Recycle** as much as possible: the LOO gets dedicated mixed recycling bins for things like mixed paper (our biggest item) as well as tubs and tins if recyclable. Recycling bins are moved to the curb as filled and replaced with empties by either recycling volunteers as they make their rounds or LOO volunteers, as either has capacity.
- b) **Trash:** LOO has a plethora of materials that come in dirty, broken, and otherwise unusable. We have a dedicated dumpster for all of this that is parked on the curb right outside the LOO. We have been pretty darned good for the last several years about limiting ourselves to 1 dumpster for all of intake. Here are some **important safety rules** for the dumpster:
 - i) **NO OPEN TOED SHOES.** You must be wearing close-toed shoes to enter the dumpster.
 - ii) As much as possible, walk, do not throw, materials into the dumpster. **NEVER throw materials over the wall without making sure that no one is inside first.**
 - iii) **If you are going into the dumpster to add or sort materials, YELL LOUDLY “IN THE DUMPSTER”** first, just to make sure that folks know you are in there and they should not do what I just mentioned in part ii.
 - iv) Be as efficient as possible about filling the dumpster, stacking materials at the back before moving forward, with heavy materials to the bottom as much as possible
 - v) Glass and broken materials: we generally create a **BROKEN GLASS box on the side near the front** so that it is easily accessible and contains broken items. Please do not put other materials in that dedicated box. Broken mirrors and glass plates get gently placed along the side wall, glass facing the wall if they have a backing.

5) Have fun doing it

This rule seems pretty self-explanatory, but we're going to explain it anyway. The LOO- and all rotary jobs- is a really hard job. Actually it's harder than a lot of other rotary jobs because you are outside in all kinds of weather, often lifting heavy items (unless you can't, that's totally ok, find someone else to do it for you), and often exposed to icky and mystery materials (yes, unfortunately some people donate you the trash bag from their garage and didn't look in it first to see that the bottle of used cooking oil they put at the top spilled over everything. And yes, that really has happened). It takes a sense of humor to work here, and we highly encourage laughing, singing, joke-telling, and impromptu posing wearing the weird hat you found. Those of us who work the LOO can tell you that it is hard work, but it is also really, really fun!