

# TROSA thrift store expands

The thrift store moves to a larger location on E. Greer Street, and has seen major revenue growth

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An investment in a larger space for the Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA) thrift store may mean double the revenue toward the organization's bottom line.

That means more opportunities for folks like Sissy Hosay to learn a new trade and start a new life at no cost.

Hosay works in the framing section of the store's new location at 1703 E. Geer St., which has been open since November. TROSA held a grand opening for the new location on Jan. 25.

## Bigger store, bigger profits

Attendees of the grand opening received 10 percent off their purchases and a chance to tour a dozen rooms filled with couches, cabinets, clothes, knick-knacks and more.

At the previous location, which was smaller, TROSA only sold furniture and couldn't take donations at the door.

"At the furniture shop we could only display a limited selection, so sometimes people would come in looking for a couch and we would only have three or four," said Jeff Stern, TROSA's director of special projects. "Here, we've probably got 20 or 30."

Stern said even without heavy advertising, the store about doubled its profits in the first two months at the new location.

"We definitely look at this as a growing contributor to TROSA's bottom line," he said.

## Providing a fresh start

Hosay started work in the store's frame shop after moving from Florida six months ago to join TROSA's two-year rehabilitation program.

Through the program, TROSA provides substance abuse treatment, vocational and leadership training and housing free of charge.

Participants are hired to work for TROSA's businesses, which include a moving company, a lawn care company and the thrift store. The profits from these businesses are combined with



Health Culp and Tracy Olsen work quickly to check out customers at the store's new location. The line was the longest that TROSA has ever seen. "It's been busy," Culp said. "A lot of nice customers, a lot of support." (Staff photo by Zoe Schaver)

donations and grants to fund the program.

Before joining TROSA, Hosay was a pet groomer for 22 years. She became addicted to prescription painkillers after having three surgeries in five years.

"The program works, it really does," Hosay said. "I found my niche right here."

The frame shop is one of the only businesses around that still does picture framing by hand.

"We're very busy," she said. "It's every week we have tons of work."

## All hands on deck

For the grand opening, the store brought in 15 to 20 additional workers to help the usual 10-person crew move extra furniture.

Justin Tate normally works for TROSA's moving company, but pitched in for the opening.

"I think the store's really well laid out," Tate said. "It's a lot of space, and it's easy to maneuver. They've been moving some pretty big pieces out."

The previous store location was a rental, which Stern said was more expensive in the long run.

The new building came to TROSA last year as a mix of donation and purchase.

"We just thought it would be a great space for a thrift store," Stern said. "It really allows for a larger selection."

## Shopper approved

Grand-opening shopper Carol Peltesen said she shopped often at the old location and would continue at the new one because she supports TROSA's mission.

"It's a dual purpose," she said. "It's not necessarily the prices, but it's what they do."

Samantha Carr lives near Virginia, but was visiting North Carolina when she saw the balloons and stopped by the grand opening. Carr said she had heard nothing of TROSA's social mission, but was impressed by the size of the store.

"It's a lot to see," she said. "I haven't gotten halfway yet."

It's normal for TROSA to get business from people who may not even know about its rehabilitation aspect, Stern said.

"From the beginning, TROSA has focused on providing exceptional customer service and trying to make an exceptional product," he said. "People may feel good about helping others, but when it comes down to spending money, you need to have the service or the product."