

## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: **Great Stuff Savvy Resale** BY CHARLES ZOELLER

»» When the COVID-19 pandemic struck last spring, many small businesses were drastically affected. The new challenges these businesses faced meant making big changes to daily operations, or risking shutting down entirely. One industry hit the hardest was retail, where small businesses were already competing with the advent of online shopping. One business, a small shop in the Talleyville Shopping Center, off Concord Pike, was no exception. On May 14, Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's Great Stuff posted on social media that they would be closing, citing the previously mentioned factors, and thanked all those who had volunteered or shopped at the store.

The journey for DBCC's Great Stuff began nearly a decade earlier when the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) realized a need for funding outside of government grants. A small team of staff and volunteers within the community decided to build a purpose-driven nonprofit store focused on luxury brand clothing. The store would rely on donations from the community and volunteers to keep the store running day-to-day. The store's mission aimed at



supporting “the life-changing programs and services offered through the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition” and “helping women and men in our local community who are impacted by breast cancer.”

In the decade that followed, DBCC's Great Stuff was able to boast an impressive \$447,000 donated to the DBCC. Business was spurred by the deep discounts and great bargains on

luxury brands being offered and the wide selection of clothing available. From women's casual clothing, eveningwear and shoes to accessories, there was something for everyone. DBCC's Great Stuff even expanded into furniture and home furnishings by opening a second location not far from the first. Perhaps the most special thing about the store, however, was the environment that was created behind the shop's doors.

Many of those who volunteer at DBCC's Great Stuff are breast cancer survivors. Over time, women with breast cancer began going to the store not only to shop, but to talk with these survivors. Talking to survivors is, as Sue Murray,

DBCC's Great Stuff invites anyone to visit the store, whether it be for shopping or donations of upscale clothing or home furnishings. Outside of the store, those wishing to get involved can donate, sponsor, or participate in one of the DBCC's many upcoming events. Visit [www.debreastcancer.org](http://www.debreastcancer.org) to learn more.

Operations Director at the DBCC, describes, “different than going to a therapist” because the survivors have experienced firsthand the challenges a breast cancer diagnosis can bring. Many of these women were made to “feel beautiful while being styled by store volunteers” according to Murray, furthering the contributions the store had on the community. These support systems often resulted in friendships and eased the hardship some of these women face.

It comes as no surprise that when the DBCC and Great Stuff Boards made what they thought would be their last social media post, the community came to the store’s aid. “Volunteers and the community have stepped up in a remarkable way, donating and shopping to help drive the business forward...through this crisis,” explains Francesca Vogel, the Executive Director of the DBCC.

The generosity of the community has allowed DBCC’s Great Stuff to remain open, a luxury many businesses have not been able to afford during this pandemic. Keeping the store open has allowed the crucial support systems some women have found within the store to remain unbroken.



**Charles Zoeller** interned for the State Chamber in the summer of 2020. This fall he will be a senior at the University of Delaware majoring in both business management and media communication.

## Chair Message

BY KATIE K. WILKINSON

»» As Delaware employers work to enable the safe and healthy return of staff to office locations around the state, we should also be mindful of the critical work ahead of us on the subject of racial injustice and resulting opportunity gaps.

Over more than 100 days of this pandemic, your State Chamber has worked diligently to provide timely and relevant topics for discussion for members and non-members across the business community. We have covered topics such as the economy, employment, transportation, child care and health care. But likely the most important topic was discussed on the heels of the murder of George Floyd and the resulting protests across our state and our country.

Dr. Tony Allen, president of Delaware State University and Stephanie Creary, associate professor of management from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania provided us with a provocative “wake-up call” on the systemic racism that exists in our society and communities. They reminded us that this issue requires action by everyone to make progress, and our actions need to be consistent and long term – not just for today and tomorrow.

Action is key; we cannot merely talk about racism. So, an obvious question is how we – as employers – can be effective in our engagement?

A start is acknowledging deficiencies in our organizations. This requires an honest, open, and transparent assessment that may be uncomfortable and an action plan to address the deficiencies. We should enlist the help of any and all allies who are willing to be vulnerable and are open to learning and sharing their stories in a safe and teachable way. It is also our job as employers to make a commitment to hiring and developing a more diverse workforce. If you think it is difficult to find people of color during the hiring process, then maybe – as Dr. Allen remarked – “you’re not looking hard enough.”

Our actions should support our words of encouragement and enlightenment. The opportunity is here, supported by broad momentum! Be a change agent inside of your family, organization, and community!



*To eradicate systemic racism, it is important for managers to empower employees and provide them with resources for having productive conversations about race.*

— Stephanie Creary, Assistant Professor of Management,  
Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania