

Easy Ways to Exchange Goods

Many individuals and families are spending more time at home these days due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The time at home has provided an opportunity for people to declutter and clean up spaces to practice or expand minimalist habits or make room for new items.

Although contemplating what to do with personal and household items can be exciting, it is important to keep in mind the importance of where our belongings may ultimately end up, such as landfills. Diverting items from landfills and giving them a second chance to be useful through a neighborhood materials exchange program is possible!

The Buy Nothing Project, which operates on Facebook, began in 2013. This program was created by individuals who volunteer their time as mentors and guides. The Buy Nothing Project uses a gift economy model, which builds trust between members and encourages individuals to give freely and ask for needed items. The Buy Nothing Project has about 1.2 million participants in at least 25 countries and is led by about 6,000 volunteers.

The Buy Nothing Project practices the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink), principles which help prevent items from entering the waste stream. The organization encourages independence from single-use and virgin materials by giving life to existing items through gifting and/or sharing them within neighborhoods. To get started or for more information, visit www.buynothingproject.org.

Freecycle is another materials exchange social media platform to consider when you have decided to part with some of your possessions. The Freecycle Network began in 2003. The organization includes approximately 5,000 groups and more than nine million global members. Freecycle is a grassroots effort to reuse and keep durable items out of landfills. To get started or for more information, visit www.freecycle.org.