

'WELCOME HOME!'

SALLY SCHROCK SAW A NEED AND CREATED SECOND STARTS, WHICH HELPS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES BEGIN A NEW.

By Tracy Line
For Current In Carmel

A fresh start, a new beginning, a second chance; who hasn't needed this at least once in his or her life? Sometimes when the stars align and all is right with the world, we catch that lucky break we're seeking. And when we do, we remember most those who helped us on our way. For many, Sally Schrock, is that someone.

Schrock is the founder of Second Starts, a not-for-profit charity that supplies household goods, at no charge, to the formerly homeless. She collects, organizes and then graciously delivers new and gently used items such as linens, dishes and lamps to those who have next to nothing. And she does it well. In the last six years, Schrock and her volunteers have assisted hundreds if not thousands of people. Currently, she gives basic housewares to an average of 16 individuals a week.

Schrock is no stranger to helping the less fortunate. For 10 years she participated in IHN through her church. IHN, or Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a national program that provides temporary shelter, meals and support

in the basement of the mission-house at Carmel United Methodist Church. The church allows her to store her supplies for free. Here she sorts, inventories and organizes all donations. Goods come from individuals, churches and corporations.

Some items are new, but most are gently used. She gets a little of everything. Laughingly she admits, "If I can carry it, I'll take it." Reuse is important to Schrock.

"I feel like we're recycling. Many people can afford to get new things when they're redecorating and all, and they no longer need their old stuff. We recycle their former stuff by giving it to someone who really needs it."

Nothing goes to waste. If she can't use it, she'll



Sally Schrock sorts goods.
"Photo by Bryan Unruh"

"You see somebody that works on Saturday, and every Monday through Friday and she isn't even getting paid for it. She's extraordinary." —Jana Miller

to homeless families. It was in doing this that her idea for Second Starts came to fruition.

"There was a woman there and she said 'I need sheets,'" says Schrock. "I thought, hey, we all take our stuff to Goodwill, I bet I could get people to give me their stuff instead."

That very week she applied for a nonprofit status and formed Second Starts. Needless to say, the woman she had spoken with got her sheets.

Now Schrock spends most of her days

sell it. Schrock organizes an annual garage sale, and hosts a flea market booth year-round. She uses the proceeds to cover operating expenses.

Reactions to Schrock are not quite what you'd think. Some individuals become teary and even hug Schrock when she arrives with her armload of goods. Others though, don't even bother to thank her. This might deter many of us who would be inclined to judge, but not Schrock.

"The very first day, I had to ask myself, 'Am I doing this for me, or am I doing this because it needs to be done?'" she says. She decided her mission was to help, not to be rewarded. It is this selfless attitude as well as her cheery disposition that make Sally Schrock and Second Starts stand apart from other charities. Just ask her volunteers.

Marsha Coyner, previously of Carmel, has been volunteering with Schrock once a week for close to three years.

"I enjoy working with Sally" says Coyner, "She has a clear vision about what she is doing and (she) works really hard." Coyner also finds the work extremely rewarding, "It is very hands on" she says, "I have the sense that this is something very meaningful."

Jana Miller, of Carmel, agrees. She began volunteering two years ago.

"We make deliveries and walk into homes that have absolutely nothing in them" says Miller, "It's a nice reality check for me to realize I (already) have so much." She too has a great respect for Sally, "You see somebody that works on Saturday, and every Monday through Friday and she isn't even getting paid for it. She's extraordinary."

They may not get paid in terms of money, but Schrock and her volunteers receive rewards in other forms. Coyner says the work is fun and she feels her efforts truly make a difference. She likes the fact that they reuse everything noting that it is good for the environment. Miller can't say enough about

Sally Schrock

Personal: Age 47, married with two grown children.

Title: Founder and president of Second Starts. She quit her full-time job as a medical billing manager 3 and a half years ago to devote her time to Second Starts.

Her agency: Founded in 2002, Second Starts is a 501.c.(3) charity that supplies basic housewares, without cost, to the formerly homeless.

By the numbers: In the past six months, Second Starts has helped more than 600 individuals.

Schrock and the work they are doing, "You walk away from working a day with her and it's better than a paycheck."

Schrock welcomes all donations and is always ready for a helping hand. To make a donation or to volunteer, contact her at 569.0089 or check out her Web site at www.secondstarts.org.

Tracy Line is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in numerous publications. You may contact her at tracy.line@insightbb.com.

Care to Help?

Second Starts accepts donations of new and gently used household goods such as sheets, towels, shower curtains, dishes, dish towels, small appliances and just about anything else you no longer need.

To donate items you no longer need or if you are interested in volunteering, contact Sally Schrock at 569.0089, 908.2666 or www.secondstarts.org.