

One Person's Trash IS Another One's Treasure

by Kayla Miranda

In the past few years, we have seen the cost of materials rise to in some cases up to three times what it was Pre-Pandemic. Browsing through the isles at Home Depot, I saw a sheet of plywood that used to cost \$17 priced at a whopping \$60. While it lightens my heart to see more and more individuals choosing to reuse, renew and recycle, it has now become necessary financially to do so. YouTube and Google are full of amazing ideas of how to repurpose almost any item, making something that not only helps our environment, but also can be a beautiful way to spend time with your family. Fun and inventive do-it-yourself projects could be just the thing for you!

My brother Aaron is a lot like me. We were raised to be self starters, strong thinkers and dynamic personalities. It is normal to find us engaged in intense debate. We never box ourselves in. Always looking for the next project and easily bored, we tend to excel in multiple areas. Most people have heard the term, jack of all trades. The actual saying is jack of all trades, master of none. But when it comes to me and my brother, that isn't the case. For myself, I am more of a "wing it" or "free flow" type while he is a perfectionist. For the both of us, no matter what project we take up, we take it seriously and do insane amounts of research to ensure we do the best job possible. My point in this? We both tend to be involved with multiple things at same time, as well as having very interesting employment histories. My brother does landscaping and lawn care currently, but still dabbles in construction and



Some items built by my brother, Aaron with recycled materials that had been discarded: a desk, an aquarium, a bed frame, TV stand and more.

carpentry. He also does food catering and concessions. I won't list his other areas in this article but needless to say, he is very talented.

When Aaron was removing a shed and deck from a client's backyard a few months ago, he remembered that I and Esperanza often speak about reusing materials instead of allowing them to fill up our landfills. The wood from this de-construction was deemed "trash" by the owner, so he brought me the wood and asked if it

could be used. As he was walking around my small living room, he asked if I would like some new furniture. You'll see some of the results here. So far he has built a fish tank stand,

a queen size floating bed frame, kitchen shelves and my desk. He is currently working on a tv stand with built in cubbies to be used also as a dresser for my girls. With the small rooms in Alazan/Apache, saving space is a must. With a low cost purchase of sanding paper, wood stain and a few led light strips he turned this pile of "trash" into the gorgeous looking items that now adorn my small unit. My kids had a great time

helping him sand and paint, while learning useful skills.

The moral of this story? Old or worn does not mean worthless. Instead of being a throw away society, replacing things just for the sake of it, remember that trash isn't always trash. New doesn't mean better. Quality over quantity. It not only saves you some money, it saves our world for the future.

BIO: Kayla Miranda, a housing justice advocate organizing in the Westside of San Antonio, resides at the Alazan/Apache Courts.