



Fires Center of Excellence
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Fort Sill Thrift Shop: A place to catch and release

FORT SILL, Oklahoma (Feb. 4, 2021) -- There is a one-stop-shop where you can give and receive. It's the Fort Sill Thrift Shop.

Dropping off unwanted items to free up the space in your home, and purchasing items at a fraction of their original cost saves money, creating a win-win cycle.

This cycle also benefits the Lawton Fort Sill community on a much larger scale.

Last year, the thrift shop donated more than \$22,000 to organizations that help service members and families.

The list includes USO of Oklahoma, the Toys for Kids Program, Fort Sill Commissary vouchers for Soldiers who need them, Patriot Spouses Club Scholarships, Fort Sill Retiree Council, The local chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Survivor Outreach Services, Armed Services YMCA, and Home at Last.

"We donated this year starting in January, \$5,000 to the Half Section," said Tayna Cabrera, Fort Sill Thrift Shop manager.

Cabrera said with COVID-19 shutting down the store last year, she was worried they wouldn't be able to give as much as they did.

“It was really amazing because last year we were closed for two and a half months. When we reopened we sold a lot.

“Customers, every other day we see the same people, but we also have new ones every day. We receive a lot of donations from PCSs and consignments, too. During the weeks like spring break, everybody wants to clean the garage, so those people bring a lot of stuff.”

As far as what is sold in the store, Cabrera said it’s such a wide variety that the shorter list would be to tell what they do not sell.

Items that aren’t sold are used underwear, socks, or mattresses and they do not take anything that is highly flammable like gas tanks.

They accept consignments, with the consigner getting 75 percent of the profit back. Cabrera said they have approximately 250 consigners who come on a regular basis.

The store has 40 volunteers who keep all the items moving through the cycle of donations to stage on the floor ready for purchase.

“We are very busy,” said Cabrera.

She said a normal day for volunteers starts at 8:30 a.m. with each person working a specific station.

Some take care of the consigners, others receive all the merchandise and tag it, and then others take those tagged items and sort them on the floor.

“I have people in here that have been volunteering in the thrift shop for 45 years,” said Cabrera. “I think all the volunteers, from my point of view, like to give back to the military community, after all they received through the years when they (or their spouses) were active military.”

While the shop donates money every year to other military-related organizations, it also donates unwanted merchandise to help those in need.

“Everything that is a baby item that doesn’t sell in the store after 60 days I put in a box and give it to Birth Choice in Lawton. Any clothes and books that we don’t sell after 60 days, we give to Teen Challenge,” said Cabrera.

“We’re also looking to help the community in general. Lawton is a military community so we have Soldiers, retirees, veterans everywhere.”

The organization makes exceptions for those in need.

“I remember one year a family — their house caught on fire. I just opened the store and we told them whatever you need, just take it,” said Cabrera.

The Thrift Shop is at 1713 Gruber Road. Its hours are Tuesdays through Fridays, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m; and the first and third Saturdays of the month, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Doors are locked 15 minutes before closing. The phone number is 580-355-8731.

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Editor’s Note:

For any questions pertaining to Fort Sill please contact Fires Center of Excellence Public Affairs office at 580-442-6270 or 580-442-2521.