

Power Of A Paper Clip

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LANCASTER COUNTY, PA - Staff Writer Don't shove that humble paper clip in a drawer.

That wiry little nonentity often taken for granted could catapult dreams into reality.

United Disabilities Services, a Lancaster nonprofit providing services for people with disabilities and the elderly, is banking on **the power of a paper clip.**

Canadian blogger Kyle MacDonald did, and in 14 online trades, starting with a red paper clip, he bartered his way to a farmhouse. His yearlong clip crusade, beginning in 2005, sparked international attention and ultimately inspired Cindy Davidson, UDS vice president of sales and marketing, to launch an "out-of-the-box" fundraiser.

She helped ignite the inaugural UDS "One Red Paper Clip" campaign, which is encouraging teams from businesses, civic clubs and churches as well as individuals to start trading.

Beginning with only one red paper clip, participants have through March 31 to "trade up" for the most valuable item they can obtain. That item will be donated to UDS, which will auction the "trades" online or at the One Red Paper Clip Celebration Friday, April 30.

Proceeds benefit UDS, including the service dogs and adult enrichment programs and custom wheelchair seating.

Registration for trading teams is March 15.

So far everything from jewelry, a signed Lindsay Buckingham CD to a tower garden have been in the UDS trading mix. The estimated values of donated items so far range from \$30 to \$1,200.

MacDonald's journey included meeting Alice Cooper and trading a KISS snowglobe to actor Corbin Bernsen, and the Canadian continues to conduct trading worldwide and speak about the powers of giving.

He will offer his "testimonial" at the UDS celebration scheduled at the Lancaster County Convention Center.

"It really boils down to the fact that everyone has an idea and a goal," he relayed in an e-mail, "and when they set out to reach that goal the path there is often unpredictable and much more exciting than anticipated in the first place."

Davidson's trying to create some "buzz" - a "viral" aspect - around the UDS campaign.

There's a page on Facebook, where all sorts of trades and success stories are recorded, as well as a One Red Paper Clip blog at www.udservices.org/paperclip.

"We envision the impact of this initiative to go beyond raising money for a great cause," Davidson said. "The trading process creates opportunities for participants to connect with others in the community, challenge each other with some friendly competition and have fun while educating people about UDS."

MacDonald said one of the most meaningful aspects of his red paper clip experience, which he calls a "fun, wild ride," was meeting people and hearing about their stories and lives.

"I think people realize there are ways to make things work without seeing money as a barrier," he wrote. "Money is a terrific tool when available, but when it's not, it pays to be creative."

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Services, trips, riding lessons, a jet printer, gift certificates, you name it, people are trading it.

For instance, Jessica Mullaney, who works in the UDS Home Modifications Program, and a former consumer in the employment program, transacted with Alex Plank, an aspiring autistic filmmaker who has offered to give a signed DVD of his short film, "Autism Reality," and an educational talk about autism to any group or organization willing to make a trade to UDS.

Artist Jonathan Whitlock, a member of the UDS Adult Enrichment Program, has offered up his paintings.

Nadine Kuziemkowski, manager of UDS vocational services, is trading a signed Lindsey Buckingham CD, and 101 The Rose donated a signed Emily Osment shirt (Emily plays Hannah Montana's sidekick, Lily Truscott).

Here's one trading timeline: A red paperclip was traded for a logo golf shirt, that was then traded for an MP3 player, which was exchanged for a crystal bowl. The bowl ended up in the hands of artist Fred Swarr, who traded his painting to the owner of the bowl, Justin Brubaker.

And Brubaker is continuing to seek future trades.

In honor of her service dog, Bailey, Kelley Hornberger, has so far traded her paper clip for two tickets to Sight & Sound's "Psalms of David" and a child's ticket to Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre.

All money raised from her trades will go to the UDS Service Dog Program.

Her Facebook page is "One Red Paper Clip-Bella's Page."

"Please don't think your trade isn't expensive enough ... if other people can use what you have to trade, it's a worthwhile trade!" she said.

What's the value of one red paper clip? Davidson asks.

"That will depend on the goodwill and generosity of our community," she said, "but for someone with a disability, a red paper clip could be a custom-fitted wheelchair or a service dog - something that can truly make a difference in that person's quality of life."

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WHAT: One Red Paper Clip Celebration

WHEN: Friday, April 30, at the Lancaster County Convention Center. Cocktails from 5-6 p.m., followed by speaker Kyle MacDonald, dinner, silent auction and trading stories.

REGISTRATION: Teams can sign up until March 15. Trades can be made until March 31.

TICKETS: \$125 each; \$800 for a table; other sponsorships available

CONTACT: Teams: Tonya Martin, 397-1841, or e-mail tonyam@udservices.org. Tickets: Lori Getz, 397-1841.

ONLINE: Visit www.udservices.org/paperclip, www.facebook.com/pages/One-Red-Paper-Clip, or watch the ABC 20-20 video on Kyle MacDonald and One Red Paper Clip on YouTube.

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