

Allenspark's Hilltop Guild...Boulder County's original recycling team

Donated items cleaned up and re-styled into reusable art & one-of-a-kind holiday gifts

By Kerrie B. Badertscher, CPH – ASHS, Badertscher Horticulture



Boulder County's best kept secret is a small nonprofit located high on a hill up in Allenspark, called coincidentally, Hilltop Guild. Founded in the early 1930's this group began as an informal gathering of the women in the Allenspark area. Formalized in 1954, The Hilltop Guild remains primarily a philanthropic organization whose mission is to contribute to the well-being of the residents of Allenspark. Well, what does THAT have to do with recycling?

These ladies recycle almost everything! The community knows to donate items to the Guild so that they may be cleaned-up, recycled and re-styled into usable objects for your home. On one day - yes just one day per year - the Hilltop Guild conducts an annual bazaar reselling these crafts and art treasures back to the community. All of the proceeds go for scholarships that are awarded to graduates within the Allenspark, Lyons and/or Estes Park area. Also the Hilltop Guild supports the Flight for Life, Allenspark Fire Protection District, Air Life, Crossroads Center, Special Transit and special disaster relief. A strong connection with Charlie Eagle Plume was formed many years ago and the Guild continues to send contributions to the Kayenta Indian School in Arizona.

This year some of the crafts include recycled art from old blue jeans that have been woven into beautiful throw rugs. Still other jeans become ladies' purses. Donated yarn and textiles from the community become elegant throws, crocheted toys, placemats, aprons, hot pads and many other usable objects. The Guild prides itself on elegant weaving from its many looms. Greeting cards have new life when remade into recycled cards. Even those ubiquitous green newspaper sacks are crocheted into beach bags and other types of carriers. This year, several types of holiday ornaments are made of recycled materials. Even dominoes become a piece of usable art. Donated remnants of cloth become fun and usable items for you and your home. In addition to shopping at the various craft and art booths, there is a silent auction and a raffle event. This year, the top item in the raffle includes a handmade cross-stitched quilt that is sure to become a family heirloom.

The annual bazaar does sell newly-made items. The active members (including some ladies in their 90's) spend most of the year creating and donating home-crafted items including 144 embroidered dish towels. Each towel is different and like a gift from your Grandma! Some of the new items this year include a new line of decorated gourds and

alpine trough gardens. There are holiday items, children's' toys and clothes, all with a whimsical bent. Homemade candles, bath salts and soaps are also available.

Other items, such as books, useable household items and even some hidden old (perhaps even antique) articles find their way to the White Elephant. This is a garage sale where everyone can find a retro goody or two.

The annual bazaar, scheduled this year for Saturday, August 1st, is located on the grounds and in the donated Kelley House on Route 7 (South St. Vrain canyon), which the Hilltop Guild now owns and maintains. This historic log building provides a weekly meeting place for locals to gather and swap stories and jokes. In addition to maintaining the Kelley House, the Allen cabin site and the Bunce Schoolhouse are also part



Pictured: Viv Fausset at a small loom

of the philanthropy for visitors to take in. On most Saturdays in the summer, the historic Bunce Schoolhouse is open and kids of all ages can visit a real old-fashioned schoolhouse. It will be open on August 1st during the bazaar next door.

Come up for the day, browse around and find a treasure or two that you cannot live without. It is worth the early morning drive to help out so many of our mountain neighbors. So now you are in the know about Boulder County's best kept recycling secret. Pssst.... spread the word about the annual bazaar on Saturday, August 1st in Allenspark. Doors open at 9:00 am. See you at Hilltop.

Want to give beautiful, re-used items as holiday gifts this year? Check out the Hilltop Guild bazaar in Allenspark. You can also get quality re-used materials for pennies on the dollar at Boulder's ReSource Yard, a nonprofit program of the Center for ReSource Conservation. ReSourceYard.org. (303) 419-5418.

