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Social Enterprises Provide Space to Charities, Artists

Posted on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 By [Maryruth Belsey Priebe](#)

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Empty spaces breed dead communities, and can attract the wrong kind of attention. But several social enterprises are working hard to combat these problems by creating collaborations between landlords and creative groups to help revitalize communities and provide much-needed space to organizations in need of a place to call home.

Social Enterprise Makes Empty Commercial

Buildings Available to Charities

Finding affordable, short-term office space from which to operate can be a real challenge for cash-strapped charities, but no longer with the help of 3Space. This fantastic idea comes out of the UK where 3Space makes it easier for charitable organizations to operate by offering them temporary housing in vacant properties.

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This organization matches landlords who have short-term properties available with charities needing space for short contracts. 3Space takes care of all the administrative details - advertising the property, finding users, and getting legal documents signed - which reduces the burden on landlords. In exchange, the charitable organizations get the space they need for the time they need it. Projects like The Big Empty Shop Experiment and Foodcycle's pop-up restaurant have both taken advantage of this option.

Artists Find Homes in Empty Buildings through Social Enterprise

Another great project, [Renew Australia](#), connects artists and community projects with commercial spaces sitting vacant on a temporary and/or low-cost basis to ensure they're used until a full-paying renter comes along. This helps to revitalize downtown communities while giving starving artists and other creative groups a place to do their magic. Their stated mission is "to catalyse community renewal, economic development, the arts and creative industries across Australia."



The great news is that Renew Australia will be expanding to America to spread the social enterprise idea far and wide. Both Canada and the US will benefit from this expansion in the next couple of months. The site also includes DIY resources that help you put together a creative space reuse program in your own community.



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This post was written by:



Maryruth Belsey Priebe

Maryruth has been seeking the keys to environmental justice - both at home and at work - for over a decade. Growing up adjacent to wild spaces, Maryruth developed a healthy respect (and whimsical appreciation) for things non-human, but her practical mind constantly draws her down to earth to ponder tangible solutions to complex eco-problems.

With interests that range from green living to green business, sustainable building designs to organic gardening practices, ecosystem restoration to environmental health, Maryruth has been exploring and writing about earth-matters for most of her life. Of special interest is the subject of ecopsychology and the role the natural world plays in the long-term health and well-being of humanity. You can learn more about Maryruth's work at www.JadeCreative.ca.

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