

Thrift 2 Fight for Peace: A Fundraising Tour
Bard College
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New York State, USA

Project Lead: Jillian Read
Team Member: Collin Lewis

I. Description of the Project

We, the Thrift 2 Fight team, are requesting funding from the Davis Peace Foundation to carry out a fundraising and community-building tour through New York State. Our mission is to create a dynamic thrifting movement to fuel social and racial justice work—the sale of second hand clothes generating funding for justice and change. On this tour we will visit 10 cities with the following objectives: (1) hold a series of pop-up fundraising sales, raising \$20,000+ to support racial justice initiatives, (2) facilitate community education about antiracism activism (3) provide environmentally sustainable and affordable shopping to these communities. The connections fostered during these pop-up sales will have a lasting impact on each city, expanding networks of community activists and sparking intra-community dialogue on the intersections of race, gender, queerness, and disability.

II. Context & Mission

In June of 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, protests against racial injustice erupted all over the world. As college students with limited funds in the midst of the pandemic, we were searching for a new way to take part in and provide meaningful support to the Black Lives Matter movement. We created Thrift 2 Fight, organizing 13 weekly pop-up thrift sales in the Hudson Valley, raising and donating over \$15,000 to initiatives and organizations that fight for racial justice.

Thrift 2 Fight addresses the reality that many local racial justice initiatives lack funding and have to spend extensive time fundraising when they would otherwise be working toward their mission. Our organization acknowledges the intersections of race, class, and climate change, and the way that white supremacy and a culture of endless consumption have caused oppression. Exploitation of people and the earth are built into the very fabric of most clothing brands. The emergence of “fast fashion” has led to massive overproduction of clothing, with textiles now one of the most polluting industries on earth. By contrast, second-hand shopping is environmentally sustainable and affordable. Thrift 2 Fight adds the opportunity to support and get involved with local racial justice work, while divesting from systems of oppression.

Rae Leiner, the director of the Newburgh LGBTQ+ Center wrote: “The funds that have come to us through Thrift 2 Fight have supported the general operations of the Newburgh LGBTQ+ Center [...] It means all of the proceeds have gone to support the active leadership of BIPOC LGBTQ+ and our allies who are leading this work and fighting for systemic change by paying them for their labor. This has looked like active campaign work to fight against prison expansion, leading free programs for the community for education and providing spaces for people to come together and be in community with one another.”

III. Proposed Project & Future Plans

In 2020 we introduced Thrift 2 Fight to 5 cities and towns in the Hudson Valley, creating tangible change in their communities’ relationship to the activist organizations in the area. In 2021, we are planning a three-week fundraising tour of pop-up thrift sales, to reach a larger demographic in a shorter period of time. We will travel to 10 cities and towns in New York

State, coordinating clothing drives with local racial justice organizations. The sales will raise \$20,000+, 100% of which will be donated. This thrift tour will also allow us to:

- Empower people to shop with their values and get engaged in social justice activism.
- Raise funds to support racial justice work happening on the local level.
- Educate shoppers about civil rights, resources, and policies that affect BIPOC.
- Provide a source of affordable, stylish clothing in great condition, while diverting textilewaste from landfills.

After experiencing success with pop-up sales this past year and receiving overwhelming support from the community, we were encouraged to expand the Thrift 2 Fight movement. We spent the fall developing a business model with the goal of opening a network of brick-and-mortar stores that will be a permanent funding mechanism for racial justice, and as well as spaces to host local activist work. We were selected to present this model at an MBA pitch competition, and with the encouragement of our advisors, are dedicated to bringing it to reality. You can see our fully developed business plan and the pitch on [RebelBase](#). We aspire to support and amplify the initiatives of life-long activists who have been fighting for racial justice and transforming our communities. Beyond delivering the immediate benefits, the proposed fundraising tour will thus also help us network, expand our connections through social media, and determine cities which might be interested in partnering with a local Thrift 2 Fight storefront in the future.

IV. Indicators of Success

In 3 weeks of pop-up sales, our goal is to raise \$20,000+ for initiatives and activists. Based on our work last summer, this is a feasible goal. We will measure the tour's success with pounds of fabric waste diverted from landfill, number of people engaging with our mission, the amount of money raised, and the difference that this monetary support makes for local social justice non-profit organizations. Our presence in these cities will forge a connection between activist movements and the larger community, which will be sustained after our departure. We will also share the tools for each community to continue similar fundraising events under the Thrift 2 Fight umbrella.

V. Sustained Impact

Through Thrift 2 Fight, the Davis Peace Prize will not simply cover a summer project—it will ignite a dynamic global movement. This fundraising tour is the next step towards a world in which community action is sustained by a circular system of clothing recycling. Thrift 2 Fight links clothing to cause, product to protest, and retail to revolution. We strive to disrupt the exploitative model of fast fashion, divert a massive amount of textile waste from landfills, foster an ethic of sustainable consumption, and most of all, to give people the tools to support community activism. We understand peace not as an abstract hope, but as an action, a continual working towards understanding and solidarity. Peace is possible when we connect local and global communities in the work towards our collective growth. This project provides such an opportunity—a chance to strengthen connection, initiate change, and thrift to fight for justice.