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Recycling turns into relief effort

By Paul E. Kandarian, Globe Correspondent | January 25, 2009

Rather than haul it to a landfill, Massasoit Community College in Brockton is sending its worn-out furniture to a better place. The college has donated tons of furniture, equipment, and supplies to relief efforts in Central America and the Caribbean. The effort is in partnership with the Institution Recycling Network, a recycling cooperative based in Concord, N.H., and international relief organizations.

Massasoit, a member of the recycling network, is cleaning out and donating hundreds of items of used but useful furniture and equipment. So far, two trailers have been dispatched overseas, adding to past shipments, said **Diane Piquette**, college purchasing agent.

"We watched the trucks being loaded for shipment to Jamaica, where our old furniture will be put to good use. We talk about 'reuse and recycle,' and this was one time when we could make sure that our actions lived up to our words," she said.

Piquette and **Rocco Richardi**, director of facilities, organized a two-part strategy: Identify surplus items from around the campus and report them to the state surplus property division so they could be offered to other state agencies and communities. What was left was then loaded into two 40-foot ocean containers. The shipment included 10 tons of furniture items and an additional five tons of used electronics, such as computers.

The Institution Recycling Network's sole mission is to provide relief to the suffering throughout the world.

"What our culture sees as unwanted waste, others in the world see as critical needs," said **Mark Berry**, the network's surplus program manager. "Massasoit sent over 300 items of surplus to citizens in disaster zones in the Caribbean and Central America to be distributed to villages in Jamaica, Haiti, and Guatemala for use by those whose lives have been in turmoil due to both economic and natural disasters."

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