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| <b>Have a Party to Unload CRAP (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure)</b> | <b>Vali G. Heist, Author and Certified Professional Organizer®</b> |
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Summer is a time for relaxation and reflection. It can also a time when we slow down, find stuff in our homes and say, “Where did that come from?” or “Why do I have this?” In other words, you may encounter CRAP, which is Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure. I also define CRAP in my book *Organize This!* as stuff that does not bring joy, pleasure, usefulness, or life to a home. identify



I had the opportunity to attend a Swap Party held by Women2Women, which is an organization managed by the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A Swap Party is when people get together and bring stuff that does not bring joy, pleasure, usefulness or life to their home to one location. The party begins when they swap it for things that their friends bring to the party that **will** bring joy, pleasure, usefulness or life to their home. The items that weren't taken home were given to The Rudden Family Foundation, Inc. (TRFFI). TRFFI was established in 2012 and its mission is to provide financial and material assistance to individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Individuals are identified through existing community-based charities in Berks and Montgomery Counties.

Here's how to host your own Swap Party:

#### Get Ready

- Invite your friends to bring items to share. If you wish, choose a theme: e.g. professional clothing, gardening items, children's clothing, or household goods.
- Providing food and drink is a plus, but not necessary.
- Prepare space to display items to be swapped: use tables and clothing racks.
- If you are swapping clothes, have a changing room and a mirror available.

#### Swap!

- Provide each person with a pad of sticky notes and a pen. Write your name or initials on the notes and tag each item you are interested in taking home. Use clothespins for clothing.
- After a while, invite everyone to collect their tagged items. Items with more than one tag are determined by a random drawing.
- If needed, tag the items a second time and collect your tagged items.

#### Donate

- Guests help pack up the untagged items in the bags and boxes the items came in and the hostess donates to her favorite local charity and keeps the donation slip for her taxes.
- Schedule a new Swap Party at another home at a later date, choose another category of items and the hostess will provide the food and keep the tax donation slip.

As a professional organizer, I am a big fan of a simple and a CRAP-free life and that's why I love the television show *Tiny House, Big Living* on HGTV. One tag line for the show is 'work less, live more'. A tiny house is loosely defined as 400 square feet or less and it can sustain full time life (sleep, cook, and clean yourself). Many items in a tiny house must have dual or multiple purposes and very often functional things become art.

Finally, people who live in tiny houses find that organization is the key to living comfortably and putting stuff back where you found it is a must; but that is great advice for any home owner. If your dream is to build a tiny house, please call me! I would love to be a part of your success.

Clutter Quote: *"It's an honor and a privilege to live inside your dreams."* Billy Porter, entertainer