

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1781 Community Repair Events – Possible in Guam?

I came across an idea called Fix-It Hubs, also known as community repair events, which are gatherings that empower people to learn and practice repairing everyday items like small appliances, electronics, clothing and much more. These events are designed to promote resourcefulness, reduce waste, and establish collaborative problem-solving as well as skill-sharing. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I'm thinking this is something we could think about for Guam. Let's talk it over, next on The Extra Point.

"When 79-year-old George retired, he didn't buy a golf club or a hammock. He hung a handmade sign in his garage window: "Broken things? Bring 'em here. No charge. Just tea and talk."

His neighbors in the faded mill town of Maple Grove thought he'd lost it. "Who fixes stuff for free?" grumbled the barber.

But George had a reason. His wife, Ruth, had spent decades repairing torn coats and cracked picture frames for anyone who knocked. "Waste is a habit," she'd say. "Kindness is the cure." She'd died the year before, and George's hands itched to mend what she'd left behind.

The first visitor was 8-year-old Mia, dragging a plastic toy truck with a missing wheel. "Dad says we can't afford a new one," she mumbled. George rummaged through his toolbox, humming.

An hour later, the truck rolled again—this time with a bottle cap for a wheel and a stripe of silver duct tape. "Now it's custom," he winked.

Mia left smiling, but her mother lingered. "Can you... fix a résumé?" she asked. "I've been stuck on the couch since the factory closed." By noon, George's garage buzzed. A widow brought a shattered clock ("My husband wound it every Sunday"). A teen carried a leaky backpack.

George fixed them all, but he didn't work alone. Retired teachers proofread résumés. A former

seamstress stitched torn backpacks. Even Mia returned, handing him a jar of jam: "Mom says thanks for the job interview."

Then came the complaint. "Unlicensed business," snapped the city inspector. "You're violating zoning laws."

Maple Grove's mayor, a man who had a spreadsheet for a heart, demanded George shut down. The next morning, 40 townsfolk stood on George's lawn, holding broken toasters, torn quilts, and protest signs: "Fix the law, not just stuff!" A local reporter filmed a segment: "Is kindness illegal?"

The mayor caved. Sort of. "If you want to 'fix' things, do it downtown," he said. "Rent the old firehouse. But no guarantees."

The firehouse became a hive. Volunteers gutted it, painted it sunshine yellow, and dubbed it "Ruth's Hub." Plumbers taught plumbing.

Teenagers learned to darn socks. A baker swapped muffins for repaired microwaves. The town's waste dropped by 30%.

But the real magic? Conversations. A lonely widow fixed a lamp while a single dad patched a bike tire. They talked about Ruth. About loss. About hope.

Last week, George found a note in his mailbox. It was from Mia, now 16, interning at a robotics lab. "You taught me to see value in broken things. I'm building a solar-powered prosthetic arm. PS: The truck still runs!"

Today, 12 towns across the state have "Fix-It Hubs." None charge money. All serve tea. Funny, isn't it? How a man with a screwdriver can rebuild a world."

(Con't.)

I read this and then went to find the concept on the web. It was there, though you have to dig around for it. Other groups have taken the name and created commercial services from it, which I suppose was to be expected.

Still, it exists and could exist here and anywhere. People helping people, fixing things, saving them money, expanding their skills.

Fix-it-hub Guam? Who wants it?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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