



**V**ISITING THE RESOURCE EXCHANGE (RE) is a bit like finding yourself in the scene shop of some local theater company, with set pieces, racks of framing lumber, and cast-off props filling the space. This isn't surprising given the RE's beginnings. Executive Director Karyn Gerred boasts a background in theater and film, having worked as a scenic artist for years. In 2009, she saw a need for helping the film and theater industries reuse set materials, instead of simply sending them to a landfill. Thus was born the RE, a creative reuse organization that'd been housed in a 5,000-square-foot Navy Yard building with no electricity, no plumbing and a leaky roof.

Gerred speaks eloquently about the necessity of keeping high-quality movie and theater set materials, often only used for a short period, from being sent to the landfill. As she describes it, RE is working to "solve the problem of long-term environmental consequences of short-term productions." Historically, it's been difficult for the film and theater industries to find landfill alternatives because the reuse infrastructure in Philadelphia hasn't been able to accommodate these materials. Architectural salvage places don't want them, and thrift stores aren't set up to receive the sheer quantity of materials.

Enter RE. It focuses on structural *and* artistic reuse of these cast-off materials by artists, craftspeople, educators, students, homeowners and professionals in the green building and sustainable design fields. Framing lumber and sheeting reclaimed by RE enabled Greensaw to complete a \$1.1 million renovation project for Yikes Inc.'s new offices in Fishtown. Reclaimed

materials from RE are being used for a project at Bodine High School in Northern Liberties to create public landscapes on underutilized lots. And many local theater sets have been built with material salvaged by RE from other area productions.

With their original Navy Yard location inadequate for their needs, RE had been searching in earnest for a new location. They'd identified multiple city-owned buildings, yet the city has been unwilling to give them a break on the rent. But the organization's luck changed, receiving a grant from PPL Energy and securing a building on Cedar Street, which gives them, as Gerred notes, "one of three in the startup nonprofit triumvirate (building, staff and truck)." RE will continue to operate by appointment until it is fully staffed. ☐

## the resource exchange

- **ESTABLISHED:** 2009
- **LOCATION:** 2829 Cedar St. (at Cambria), 19134
- **HOURS:** By appointment
- **WHO SHOULD SHOP THERE:** Homeowners, builders, designers, craftspeople and artists looking for high quality, low-cost materials for building things and creating art
- **WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND:** Dimensional lumber, plywood, theatrical sets, props, lighting, office partitions, fabric, trimmings

