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The layout now is a little rough. You might find gravel-lined or dirt paths that serve as aisles between the rubber hose and discarded barbecue departments; there are even some outbuildings — wooden sheds, pole and tarp tents — that house everything from dresser drawers to medicine cabinets to whole kitchen and bathroom countertop and cabinet units. Czech and the BRING crew keep things well-organized, but the stuff seems to take on a life of its own — bike frames spilling here, rolls of chain link fence there, sparkly shards of glass just about everywhere.

With help from a \$10,000 grant through the UO Planning and Public Policy Management department, BRING has been able to do some market research and feasibility studies to see how well the current facility was serving the community as a whole.

Daniel says, "We found that there were people who *loved* our facility. But we also discovered, not surprisingly, that there was a segment of the population who found our facility fairly horrifying and scary. In order to promote reuse and to get more people to reuse and to broaden our audience beyond people just like us, we realized we were going to have to go out and meet them, that they weren't going to come to us. If we were really going to promote reuse in our community, we needed to change the way that we approached the public."

This information sealed a significant decision for BRING, to move its reuse facility to a more expansive, people-friendly location. This has not been easy. "We've always been a grassroots, counter-cultural organization," says Daniel. "It's been a challenging process to reinvent ourselves as an organization that's going to have a bigger affect on more people. Organizational change is not easy to do, but BRING will not survive without this transformation."

A flat, paved, nearly 3-acre parcel of land also on Franklin Boulevard in Glenwood became available for sale last year. And having had a profitable stretch, BRING was able to put a down payment on it as the site for its expansion. It will cost nearly \$2 million to put the necessary buildings on the new site and to relocate the current facility. BRING has just begun a capital campaign to raise these funds.

Daniel says proudly, "BRING has always been self sufficient. Now we are in the position of having to raise some major funds for the move. Meyer Memorial Trust is our earliest foundation funder. Even though we've no prior history of fundraising or grants, they stepped up with a \$110,000 grant, including a \$60,000 challenge grant, which we are halfway to matching ... and a \$50,000 capacity building grant to help us get the tools and systems in place to make the transition."

BRING has also received funding from the U.S. Forest Service.

The new facility will give BRING a chance to showcase creativity in reuse. Daniel says, "We want to make this place a living demonstration, a place where people can see what they can do with reused materials." Thus far, BRING has secured the land, changed the zoning, and has a site plan approved by Springfield. The facility has permits filed, and it's had to expand the BRING board of directors, now 12 members strong, plus a UO board intern. "This is a huge, huge effort for a grassroots organization," Daniel says; the successful start is due in large part to this "dedicated and really wonderful board of directors."

## Opportunity to do Right

Daniel envisions the new facility as a destination, as something that follows in the footsteps of another counter-cultural phenomenon all grown up — Saturday Market. "It has bridged that gap. It's managed to stay

grassroots-y, but appeal to a broad group of people. We looked at this and felt that there was an opportunity to follow this example," Daniel says.

The characteristic elements that these organizations have in common include creativity, art and humor. Daniel says, "Humor and art will be our way to make a smooth transition. There is inherent humor in *stuff*. By using humor and fun and a lighthearted approach, we can bridge the gap between who we were and who we are going to be. Humor and fun are dear to our hearts. There's *so* much we can do by making this fun."

But Daniel knows the ramifications are about more than fun and humor and creativity. She says,

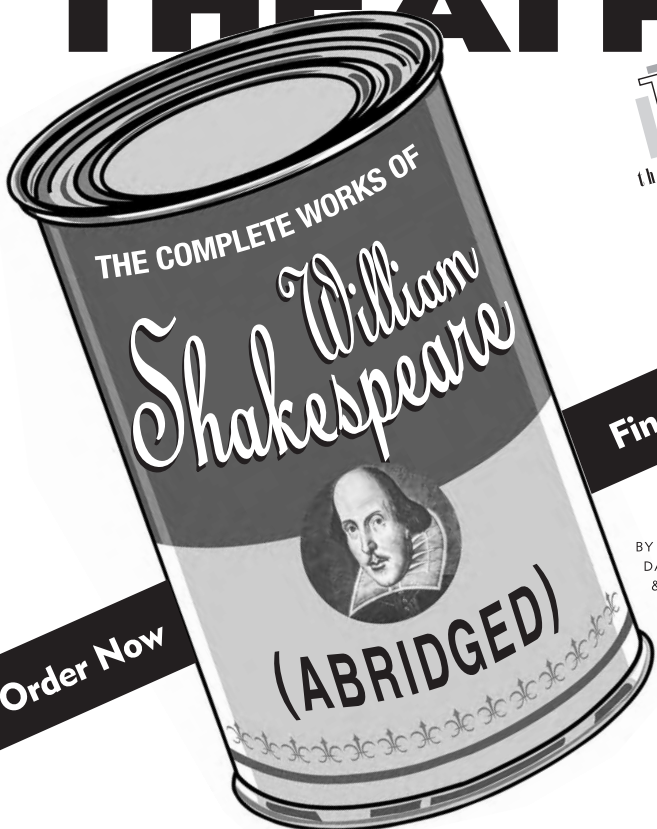
"Resource conservation is about social change and social justice. Many of the things we angst about in the world today are somehow connected to consumption of resources." In an effort to resolve these problems, and to get more of the wide swathe of mainstream society to participate in that resolution, Daniel explains, "We have to look at changing our consumption. And we at BRING believe that people change because of something appealing to them, rather than something looking bad to them."

Daniel sees the expansion as a way to empower more of the community in BRING's effort to conserve resources. "We're an organization that isn't just idealistic. We don't just tell people to do things; we give them the means by which to do them. We don't just say recycle. We run recycling programs. We provide people the opportunity to do the right thing. We encourage them. There's kind of a balance between being philosophical and idealistic and visionary, of having that fire in the belly about social change, and also having the practical means to do it." **EW**



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