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Date: Sun, 06 Feb 2005 21:08:02 -0000

Subject: [freecyclemodsquad] ADMIN: first sponsor is lined up

Hi all,

This is your friendly neighborhood ghost in the machine here. Sorry once again that I have been rather scarce of late. Between all heck breaking out in my day job, having a new computer installed (yes, my first new computer in 6 years!), moving forward with the lawyers on Canadian and Int'l trademark stuff and finalizing the contract with our first ever sponsor, my life has been kinda not so great for the past week or two.

However, the not-so-greatness is yielding some positive fruit.

Here's the fruit:

- 1) The lawyer is moving forward on the Int'l trademark stuff and Canada as we speak. This is critical and timely (funding for this is from our first sponsor).
- 2) My most problematic recycle crew member is detoxing and will be back on the job Monday.
- 3) As the sponsorship contract has been finalized, I will finally be able to quit my day job with two-weeks notice in the coming week.
- 4) Wow, see number three again -- thank heavens and earth.
- 5) Oh, yes, the sponsor contract is final and I should get the signed contract by tues. wed. or so. This is what I wanted to give you guys the big heads up on. The CBC Canadian Marketplace TV special will be running this evening in Canada and I am pretty sure they interviewed, and will air an interview with our first ever sponsor. So the info is going "public" and I wanted to let you guys know.

Sooo... the first ever sponsor of The Freecycle Network is the largest recycling company in the US and goes by the name Waste Management/Recycle America Alliance. Their new CEO as of this year is putting a lot of emphasis on recycling. They see recycling as the way of the future and as such want to begin emphasizing the environmental issues associated with waste management and the importance of recycling and reuse.

Pulling this off with the new top management moving the company in this direction is an impressive feat. The approval of our sponsorship was a critical element of this achievement. As you can imagine telling people not just to recycle but also to reuse items, such as The Freecycle Network does, subtracts from their recycling and their landfill income. They have decided ala "Miracle on 34th Street" to sponsor us anyway. This is big.

Recycling as a topic in the US has stalled a bit in the past years, but recycling as a viable option for cities is just beginning to grow to the next level with high-tech single-stream recycling sorting facilities. Cities that have been starting to phase out recycling like New York will have a new more viable means to do so. This is accompanied by a realization of the vast societal waste currently occurring and the opportunities which are possible thru reuse using the internet as a tool. The Freecycle Network, as a movement, is coming to fruition on the cusp of this next generation of recyclability. What we stand for and what is soon to come as the next generation of recycling and reuse is exciting and new. People want to be a part of it. The prospects of a "reuse-based, worldwide gift economy" are something we are just beginning to tap into. That's why I love the phrase first coined by Albert in Portland, "Changing the world one gift at a time." Such a small act of one gift can be so powerful as we are now seeing.

Anyway, back to sponsorship: WM/RAA in no way has any ownership or control over what we choose to do or not to do. They are sponsors only.

This will enable me to quit my day job and begin the next phase of development: the new website design. It is also providing all funds for trademark protection and legal fees.

That's about it. I can't tell you how relieved I am that this is going through.

All my best,
Deron

BACKGROUND STUFF:

Why sponsors?

In order to run this crazy network as it is, some funds are necessary, for trademark protection, legal fees, corporate fees, bookkeeping and for a modest staff. We don't currently have these funds. Further, part of my goal is to enable the entire Freecycle Network to be able to move off of Yahoo into a non-commercial, nonprofit environment. Our 800,000 members are generating profit for Yahoo by reading their ads. Leaving Yahoo would enable us to get away from the numerous pop-up style ads, etc. that we are currently subject to within the Yahoo framework and would enable each group to have their own local website like springfield.freecycle.org and further build the local gift communities. It would also enable one to choose categories of posts one wishes to receive, etc. Relative to the global scale of what we are doing, the funds we need to cover something like this are rather modest and imminently (sp?) doable.

I will seek this funding from every noninvasive source possible: this includes sponsorship, foundation/grant funding, donors and perhaps also municipalities / state recycling associations.

Currently our 501(c)3 IRS status is still pending. This eliminates all but modest donations from individuals, entirely eliminates grant funding but leaves sponsorship as an extremely viable option. Companies need to know that we are a nonprofit (whih we already are) doing good things (this we are) and any tax-deductability is merely a secondary perk for them. If a company supports a good cause it reflects positively on them as well, obviously. So, sponsorship is a great option right now.

That's about it. Thank you all for the part each of you are playing in this whole thing. It is only with the passion and commitment with each of you that we are able to keep this a nonprofit public commons and to build on this concept as a larger, worldwide gift economy (big stuff).

Happy Sunday,

Deron

Info on them from the WM/RAA website:

Waste Management (WM) / Recycle America Alliance is the nation's largest recycler of municipal solid waste. Operating primarily through Recycle America Alliance, they operate 80 material recovery

facilities, 11 regional glass and plastics processing plants, and 3 electronic scrap processing facilities. Each year, their Recycle America operations handle about 8 million tons of recyclable materials.

Who is RAA? (also from their webpage)

They are an alliance that meets diverse recycling demands worldwide. Recycle America Alliance currently operates 80 recycling plants and provides marketing services for more than 140 locations in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, they operate 11 container processing facilities, one plastics recycling facility and 3 electronics recycling facilities.