

Pitt students buy used furniture to save money

By Sarah Demchak, Staff Writer

Students are already looking for off-campus living for the next academic year, and furniture shopping can get expensive. Luckily, there are various options students can use to make their apartments cute on a budget.

Hannah Moore, a senior molecular biology major, said the first place to look is the basements of their parents or other family members. She said her family saved their couches over the years — despite their battered states — for the sole purpose of filling her future college apartment.

“The couches both came from my family,” Moore said. “We’ve just been collecting furniture for years. Whenever a friend was giving it away or we bought new furniture because ours was really run down, I would tell my parents to save it for me because I don’t care if it has rips if I’m in college.”

Many students may get lucky and find free furniture already in their apartments or outside on the street, according to Moore. She said she found a couple of pieces while moving into her apartment in Pittsburgh.

“Our table, we just inherited in our apartment. It was here when we moved in, and we just kept it because it’s big and nice,” Moore said. “The coffee table, we actually just found on the street when we moved in as well. So those are both used as well from other students.”

Friends and fellow students may have furniture options if their family basements are empty. Caroline Weiss’ friends gave her a desk and chair for free. Weiss, a senior environmental studies and political science double major, also utilized the Pitt Class of 2023 Facebook page to find her bed at a decent price in Pittsburgh.

“I would recommend Facebook Marketplace, and I even just use our class’ Facebook page,” Weiss said. “I saw that someone posted their bed there and was like, ‘Oh, that’s a really good price and then I won’t have to transport it across the state.’ So I just went with that and would definitely advise other students to do the same.”

Other online platforms such as OfferUp and Craigslist also sell budget-friendly furniture. These virtual programs allow people to buy and sell items to other users, like digital furniture thrifting. Buyers can set price ranges, location preferences and category options to find exactly what they are looking for.

Juin Sommer, a junior computer engineering major, has used these platforms many times to find furniture. For example, Sommer purchased a large sectional couch on Facebook Marketplace for \$200. He said he recommends using online exchanges if students cannot find free furniture.

“Look for free stuff first, like friends or family that are giving away furniture,” Sommer said. “And then cheaper places like on Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist or OfferUp — a lot of people do it online trying to get rid of old furniture.”

Students can also try used furniture stores. Pittsburgh Furniture Company offers a plethora of used furniture options for students. Located in Lawrenceville, this store sells durable, reasonably priced mid-century modern furniture, according to Danni Lee, the company’s manager.

The company buys furniture through online auctions, local thrift stores, estate sales and through local sellers. These purchased pieces get refinished if they are damaged by one of the store’s three employees.



Lee said they value fairness when it comes to their prices, which is possible because of the store's constant flux of furniture. She said their prices are generally half of the top-market value with an additional 20% off. Customers can buy a coffee table for \$45 or \$900.

"We also just try to be reasonable because we just move furniture so quickly. Almost every two weeks the whole store is all new," Lee said. "We always just try to keep our prices reasonable too because we're not trying to get rich — we're just trying to help people honestly."

Lee said their delivery service is also cheap and can help students easily transfer furniture into their apartments.

"It's usually about \$20 to \$40. It depends how far away people are. \$40 is usually South Hills, but if you're really close, like Oakland, it's just \$20," Lee said. "And then they put it in the room you want it in too. A lot of other delivery services, they just leave it at the curb."

According to Lee, about 45% of their customers are students, so they offer resale services. Students can buy a piece and sell it back to the company once they finish college. Lee said their furniture is durable, allowing for a good resale price.

"Sometimes you can even sell it online, like on Facebook Marketplace people are selling the same exact piece of furniture we have here for more. It's insane. It's absolutely insane," Lee said. "Mid-century furniture holds its value really well. It's just really good quality."