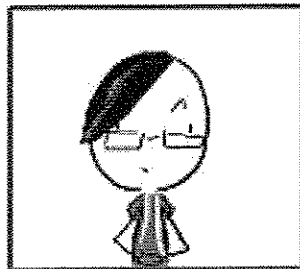
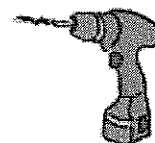


Build it yourself

Making Do: The Rise of the Halifax Tool Library



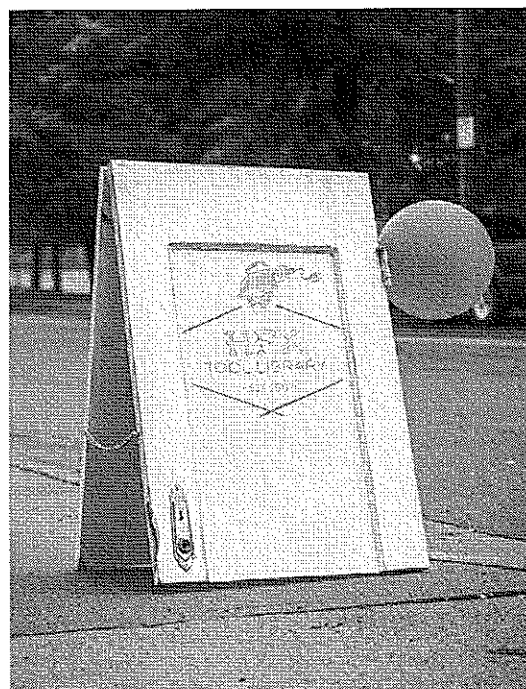
By Elliott Gish



Whether fixing a wobbly table leg or building a dream house, at some point in their lives, everybody needs tools. Unfortunately, most people don't have the space or money for a full set of screwdrivers, let alone bigger, specialized items like belt sanders and bench planes. If you need tools but can't afford to buy them, Halifax has the answer for you: the Halifax Tool Library!

History

The Halifax Tool Library's founding members conceived the idea for an independent tool library in 2013, after reading about similar initiatives in Berkeley, Toronto, and Vancouver. Wondering if other Haligonians would use such a resource, they decided to circulate a number of surveys (online and off) to gage the level of public interest and found that many people were excited about the prospect of a tool library, specifically one that specialized in home repair (Grant 2014). After hosting a tool drive and crowdfunding campaign, Halifax's first tool library was up and running!



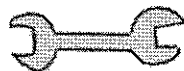
Courtesy of the Halifax Tool Library, 2014

What is the tool library?

The Halifax Tool Library is a community-based initiative where old tools are taken in by donation, repaired if necessary, and sent back out into the community to "fix Halifax." They are partnered with several other Halifax organizations such as Bike Again, the Ecology

Action Centre, and the Parker Street Furniture Bank (Grant). Their stated mission is to “[put] underused tools in the hands of people who need them” (Halifax Tool Library, 2014). Yearly memberships are fifty dollars per person, although exceptions can be made for low income individuals and families, and tools can be borrowed for a week at a time, with renewals depending on supply and demand. Items available for members range from paint equipment to Allan keys to shovels, lawnmowers, and rakes (Clark, 2014). Members are encouraged to submit pictures of their creations after completion. Donations are very rarely turned away from the Library—every tool has someone somewhere ready and eager to use it! The Tool Library is open from 5:30-8 PM on Wednesdays, 9AM-12PM on Saturdays, and 6PM-8PM on Tuesdays, when only women and transgender people volunteer. Located on 6070 Almon Street, the Tool Library space, shared with bicycle co-op Bike Again, is small but well-stocked, and full of all the tools you’ll need to complete a DIY project!

Why should teens care?



Teens love to feel independent, and they love the chance to take initiative and work on their own projects. The Halifax Tool Library enables them to do just that. By giving them the means to complete their own projects, the Tool Library will encourage them to take crafting to the next level. The spirit of DIY is in creating and fixing things yourself. The resources at the Halifax Tool Library allow teens to do just that, giving

them the tools they need to make, do, fix, and create.

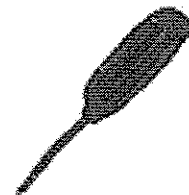
Getting teens involved

While many teens will likely not be able to afford a membership themselves, there are other ways to introduce them to the Tool Library and its DIY ethos. Introduce your teens to the concept of tool libraries and ask them if they have any big projects planned. Invite members of the Tool Library to give a talk or demonstration, and encourage your teen volunteers to attend. If the Tool Library is having a volunteer or membership drive, offer to advertise it in your library. Tell teen patrons that volunteering at the Tool Library would look good on a college transcript and get them involved that way. And, of course, consider purchasing an organizational membership and using tools from the Library in a teen program—something simple like a birdhouse-building workshop could be just what you need to get teens interested in DIY repair and construction!

Contact Information

For more information, call 902-444-8665, email info@halifaxtoollibrary.ca, or pay the Halifax Tool Library a visit at:

102-6070 Almon Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3K 1T8



Resources

Clark, B. (2014). Halifax Tool Library nails its grand opening. Retrieved from

<http://metronews.ca/news/halifax/1174525/halifax-tool-library-nails-its-grand-opening/>

Grant, J. (2014). Halifax Tool Library: Expanding Halifax's shared resource economy. Retrieved from

<http://halifax.mediacoop.ca/story/halifax-tool-library-expanding-halifaxs-shared-res/22570>

Halifax Tool Library. (2014). Our philosophy. Retrieved from <http://halifaxtoollibrary.ca/why-we-think-this-is-important/>