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## Grand Opening for New Vintage Clothing on Campus October 25

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## Grand Opening for New Vintage Clothing on Campus October 25

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Thinking green now comes in all colors, and styles. Illinois Wesleyan University students have established a vintage clothing store, and all in the name of environmental awareness.

The store, called PreShrunk, will have its grand opening from 1:30-3:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 25 in the basement of Adams Hall (1401 N. Main St., Bloomington), with a direct entrance from Main Street.

“Clothing can have a huge impact on the environment, whether it is the chemicals used to make the clothes or the growing landfills where people throw away clothes,” said Josh Clouse, who graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in May and is one of the original planners of the store. “Something as small as a store can reduce our footprint on the environment.”

Manned entirely by Illinois Wesleyan volunteers, PreShrunk is a not-for-profit effort, with all profits to be donated to local sustainable or ecological efforts. “We know we are limited in the resources we have,” said junior Mari Mermelstein, who will act as the executive manager for PreShrunk. “Not everything has to be new to be fun or useful.”

Mermelstein, a math education major, said the effort will also act as an educational tool for students. “We have an executive board of five students who help make administrative decisions,” she said. “We’re learning the ins and outs of a small business.”

Even locating the store on campus will be a small sustainability boon, said Clouse. “It may be one less time a student needs to get into their car to buy clothes. They can walk to the store on campus and reduce car emissions,” he said.

The idea for the store originated from a workshop for the University’s Office of Residential Life (ORL). “Every year, when the students move out, we see the discarding of astounding amounts of personal belongings that students simply don’t want to cart home,” said Director of Residential Life Matthew Damschroder, who thought a vintage store would provide

students with a way to recycle those unwanted items. "I'm excited the students are building a reality from that vision."

Students formed a committee that brought the store to life. The most challenging part of opening the store was not generating interest, but navigating paperwork. "I had no idea it took so much to open a not-for-profit," said Clouse, who noted the committee had guidance from several University staff members to open the store.

Clothing donations poured in at the end of last semester, said Ryan Johnson, residence hall director of Munsell Hall and the advisor for PreShrunk. "We had 19 boxes worth of clothes at the end of last May alone," he said. ORL has been holding a donation drive at the end of each semester and May Term for several years. "We used to have a garage sale in the fall from spring donations," said Johnson, "but now we have the vintage store. I think seeing that will encourage even more people to donate their items instead of chucking them in the Dumpster."

PreShrunk hours will be Monday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursday, 3 p.m.-7 p.m. and Saturday, noon-4 p.m. According to Mermelstein, committee members hope to draw in more volunteers and potentially expand hours in the future.

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