

# Delaware County

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Visit us on the web:  
[www.co.delaware.ny.us/depts/ofa/ofa.htm](http://www.co.delaware.ny.us/depts/ofa/ofa.htm)

The Delaware County Legacy Corps is operated by Delaware Support & Services, under contract to the Delaware County Office for the Aging with funding from Delaware County, NYS Office for the Aging and the Older Americans Act, and donations provided by program participants.



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## Useful Links Concerning Hoarding

### "Saving the World"

Source: Western Suffolk Psychological Service, WSPS.  
Article: by Fred Penzel, PhD

### Clutter Buster

Sources: Metro Active  
Article: by Bill Strubbe

### Help for Hoarders

Sources: [WashingtonPost.com](http://WashingtonPost.com)  
Article: by Sandra G. Boodman, Washington Post Staff Writer

## The Psychology of ....Hoarding

Source: Discover.com  
Article: by Mary Duenwald  
Discover Vol. 25 no. 10, October 2004, Mind & Brain

### Behind Closed Doors

Article: By Christ M. Kelly and Josie Rawson-December 2002

On-line support group:  
FlyLady.net

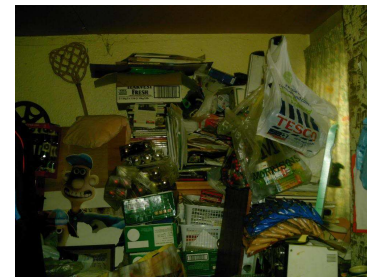


## Winter 2009-2010 Issue 2

### January 2010 Legacy Corps

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# Legacy Corps



## Note from the Editor

Have you made your New Year's resolution? If not, here is a suggestion.

We all have the propensity to save more than we really need to, myself included! But I have had occasion to observe situations where hoarding has become a tremendous problem for not only the hoarder but their family. Hoarding can exist in a variety of forms, "stuff", collections, animals, etc.

Lean times, give us an excuse to save all those "useful items" but in a day of ecology and environ-

mental awareness, there may be some items that could be recycled or donated to someone who is in need.

Today, we have self-storage units multiplying like rabbits. For some, it's just temporary due to a move or change in living situations but for some, it's because our society has too much "STUFF".

Hoarding compromises the care recipient's living conditions, safety and well being. Unfortunately, when they pass on, the family has to deal with the

"collection".

Are there items you want to pass on to someone? Why not give them to the person and they can make the decision to keep or not.

Do you have newspaper & magazine subscriptions? Perhaps you can pass the periodical on to a friend that can't afford a subscription or decrease the frequency of issues.

One step at a time and steady as you go to reducing the clutter!

*Nit*



## The 4 Key—Actions (con't. from page 3)

### The Finish What You Start Rule:

The rule may be simple but its effect might be impressive. Same as with the other rules, this one should be also applied to **everything** you do. **Finish what you start.** The key here is to tackle even the smallest of projects but to always finish them. SO what type of things would this rule apply to? Anything and everything! If you started something, **THAT** is what you should try to finish.

- If you make the effort to buy groceries, finish this off by putting them away. The bag they came in, throw it out or recycle.
- If you make the effort to do laundry, finish this by immediately folding your clothes and putting them away once they are dry.
- If you made the effort to set the table for dinner, finish this off by putting the dirty dishes in the dishwasher or by at least stacking them in the sink.

- If you took the time to pick up mail, take some extra time to immediately deal with the junk mail, bills and personal mail.

**Why is the completion of a project so important? To show yourself the RESPECT you DESERVE. When you finish things off that you started you are respecting your own efforts.**

### The 1 Time Handling Rule:

1 time handling means that when you are tidying a place, you ideally never handle an item more than

once. Practically this means that from the moment you pick it up, you deal with it by giving it a place. This place may not be yet another pile though. When you go through a pile of stuff try to avoid creating smaller piles. While this may seem to break up and restructure the big pile this only leads to losing even more space and just scattering your belongings in an even more chaotic way.

Once an item is picked up, apply 1 of the 4-KEY ACTIONS to it and make sure you finish by having put it in a practical place.

## Up and Coming!

Mtg. 10:00-noon

**January 28, 2010** - PSB, Rm. B from 10:00–noon. Subject to be announced.

**February 25** - PSB, Rm. B, Dennis McCabe from the Attorney General's office and Sheriff Tom Mills— Scams and Shams.

**Mar 16**— Advisory Board Mtg. @ Senior Community Rm. 11:00-noon

**Mar 31**- PBS, Rm. B— Maintain Your Brain presented by Chris Geetgens

**Apr 29**- PBS, Rm. B-TBA

**May 27**- PBS, Rm. B-How To Have A Good Visit"-Ann Thayer-Alzheimer's Association

## Adopt a Hero



This is a not-for-profit program that does not solicit funds in any way but is intended to support enlisted military person who have been deployed.

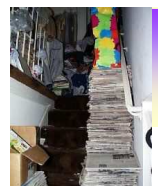
The program is 5+ years old and is an effort to support the troops. It has no political venue for or against war (s).

If you would like to Adopt a Hero, you can go to the website:  
<http://adoptahero.us>



## Did You Know?

- Recycle old rechargeable batteries [www.call2recycle.org](http://www.call2recycle.org) just enter your zip code and you will get a list of places to drop them off
- Donating old cell phones buys calling cards that are sent to troops needing to stay in touch with their families
- Donate your old glasses to the Lion's Club. They provide glasses to those who are can't to afford to buy them
- Clothing can be donated to a non-for-profit organization (eg. St. Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, etc) or consignment shop
- Recycle text books in collection bins at colleges and schools or sell or donate them to used book shops



## Understanding Compulsive HOARDING-OCD

[http://understanding\\_ocr.tripod.com/hoarding.html](http://understanding_ocr.tripod.com/hoarding.html)

Collectors gather many of the same types of objects together—a box filled with seaside shells, a jar of mismatched buttons, or an album of rare coins. Many of us squirrel away treasured mementoes, while the “packrats” among us hold on to trash or useless, outdated things for longer than they need them. But for compulsive hoarders the line between treasure and trash becomes hazy. A flurry of new research has revealing new insight into the poorly understood compulsive behavior. Ultimately, it could be the very decision of “What is treasure and what is trash?” that lies at the heart of the behavior.

Some people are literally buried alive by their possessions. Men and women with hoarding behaviors live in homes that are beyond clutter. One room overflows into the next, and every nook, cranny and crevice becomes stuffed with stuff: avalanches of newspapers, documents, and junk mail, free giveaways and objects bought or brought into the home, and very little, if anything is ever thrown away.

All of this stuff can create real danger. Aside from the obvious fire hazards, parts of the home crucial to daily living—the bed, the bath, the kitchen—become blocked by the flood of stuff. As a result people living in the home can’t do

the things they need to do to stay healthy, like get a good night’s sleep, bathe properly, or cook nutritious meals.

People living amidst the mess may isolate themselves from friends and family. Surveys of self-identified hoarders reveal that they’re more likely to be overweight or obese and to have chronic or serious medical problems. Many have been threatened with eviction or have had children or elder relatives removed from their homes because of the unsafe conditions. How does someone get to this point where the things they own, own them?

### Why People Hoard

Simplified Hoarding is about the fear of throwing something away that you might need someday, or not being able to remember it perfectly or that if thrown away it will cause a problem or that something bad may happen.

While many people keep things around them for a variety of reasons, Hoarding is an abnormal and excessive behavior of squirreling away items. This can cause more stress than comfort in the long run. That accumulation of material goods doesn’t create material comfort but will instead result in a discomfort that may disrupt their life on all levels.

How often do you hear

people say: “Typical, just after I finally threw that item away I found a use for it or needed it a few days later.” But rarely do they end up living in a house where small paths have to be created to be able to walk around.

The following reasons of why people Hoard are all closely linked, but although similar they still have distinct differences.

### Sentimental Value

- Now you would expect that these things that are kept would have a purpose, to be meaningful or valuable. But for the person that Hoards, **the usefulness and/or value may lay in the most unexpected things. Sentimental value** is only 1 of the criteria to keep just about anything. This value is also about feeling that item is part of “you”, not just an independent object.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment I discard of this item I discard a part of myself.**

### Decision Making

- The “What If’s” that are so typical of OCD are found here too. Those with Hoarding Behavior find it **extremely difficult to make decisions**, and end up avoiding having to make any decisions by keeping everything. “What if I may need this 1 day? Where is the harm in keeping just this 1 extra thing?” Not having to make the decision of discarding

something literally means that they can’t make any mistakes while doing so. Sounds simple enough You can’t do anything wrong if you don’t do anything. Those who don’t try can’t fail.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment I decide to throw something away I may be making the wrong choice.**

### Organizing

- There is also the difficulty with knowing how to organize objects, not being able to see how you could possibly store them in a logical fashion (which is ironic considering the visual chaos that is created by the Hoarder). But while this chaos may be painfully apparent for outsiders, the Hoarder himself often finds some logic in this. To him a pile of junk may very well be the only way he can sense some control and order. If only because the pile will literally be created by stacking what is most important on top.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment I am unable to know how to categorize an item, I will place it in sight so I will know where it is.**

### Responsibility:

- As you may see in OCD, you also have a tendency for people to feel HyperResponsible for what is happening around them and the people they care for. With Hoarding this can result in the accumulation of “Just-In-Case” Objects being carried around with them at all times. Example: Hauling a huge

purse around that could easily knock anybody out.

- But you also have the obligation of HAVING to use a certain item. Discarding seems to be wasting something and this is why so many items will after on be categorized under “Recycling”, “Giving Away” and so on.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment my object has a use, I have to keep/ use it so it doesn’t get wasted.**

### Control/Perfection

- Then you have **the issue of Control/Perfectionism**, again so present when looking at OCD. The fact that when you throw something away it’s gone and once in the trash you will never be able to find this item again.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment you decide to throw something away, you no longer are the person in control and what happens to this item will be in the hands of others.**

### Scared of Forgetting/ Perfection:

- Because of **the fear of forgetting** and the inability to accept that we can’t be in total control, items will be kept so that with written/printed material for instance, it can be re-read at all times. Some will find themselves looking through the garbage, checking if they haven’t thrown out something they shouldn’t have or resort to writing information down from what they see in every-day life, such as license plate #’s, in order to make sure the information won’t be

forgotten. The inability to remember all, becomes the behavior of keeping all within “arms-reach”. Hoarders have been noted to have a greater sense of Perfection than non-Hoarders and will even *expect* this Perfection whereas other may *strive* for Perfection.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment you throw something away, you may forget it’s content or the way it looked and it will be gone forever.**

### Letting Go of Things:

- 1 other point that is a motivation to Hoard is the **fear of letting go, of moving on**. Some hoarded when they were young, kept candy wrappers, elastic bands and small pieces of about...anything. The idea of losing things that had even a remotely sentimental value to them is scary; there would be no turning back, no control. It also has something to do with things being ephemeral, keeping things or parts of them, meant that they would literally prevent them from ceasing to exist, scared that parts of their life may be forever forgotten. So, they picked up small stones, leaves and kept notes and bills. They didn’t want to let go of their life and forgot there was still much more to come. All part of being afraid of death. Letting go of things in life is necessary if we want to experience some sense of freedom, but for someone with OCD this means letting go of the control they want so badly. The items become part of who they are, thus letting go would be letting go of them-

selves.

**Misconception:**  
**The moment you throw something away, you let go of the specific part of your life, however insignificant it may be.**

### Finding a lasting solution/ motivation is an important issue:

Some may feel the best solution would be to ask someone to clean the house for them while there are actual Professional Organizers that could tackle such a problem but this isn’t always a solution since this would only be taking away the result and not the cause.

Asking for someone to help is always an extra, but the point is in trying to keep things clean. Like with any other form of OCD, you may need to find help through therapy and/or medication. Specific forms of Behavioral Therapy show the best results and first and foremost, the person who hoards, will have to acknowledge the problem and be willing to seek help.

### The 4 Key-Actions

Remember, being a Hoarder means you will have to invest non-stop effort into keeping your house clean. The whole point of these “exercises” is to prevent new stuff from accumulating.



The 4 actions are:  
**Throw Away (TA)-  
Recycle (R)-Give Away  
(GA)-Keep and Put Away  
(KAPA)**

These 4 actions are the basis of **everything** you do. There should be no in-between of “Maybe I could save this...” or “Maybe I could repair this and maybe, maybe, maybe...”

- The object no longer has a use, by which is meant a direct use.

Example: Broken vacuum cleaner that has been standing there for 3 months. Can you use it right then or will you have to bring it into the repair shop while you may already have gotten a new one? So what do you do, you can’t **Keep and Put Away** so the options left are to **Recycle, Throw Away** and/or **Give Away**.

- The object has a use but is just in a pile of junk right now.

Example: Book on how to cook potatoes. This is a useful item, so unless you hate potatoes you may actually still be able to use this book. But there is no logic in keeping it in a pile in the living room. So don’t **GA, TA** or **R**, instead you decide to **KAPA**. Where should a cookbook go, yes, in the kitchen.

You get the idea, no matter item you are trying to deal with, 1 of these 4 Key-Actions should be applied. By specifying for yourself that there are only 4 options, you can start dealing with things by the process of elimination.

(see page 4 bottom)