



Published September 16th, 2020

Lafayette resident simplifies self-storage

By Pippa Fisher

A Lafayette resident has come up with a unique start-up - a concept so simple, it's brilliant.

The company, Stash-It, provides a platform to match people looking to store their belongings (Stash-it users) with neighbors (hosts) who have unused space available, such as a garage, eliminating the need for more expensive, conventional public storage facilities for any items ranging from a box of clothes to an RV or boat.

Stash-it Founder Kurt Winter explains that the idea came to him as he searched to come up with alternatives for his own storage dilemma. Winter had parked his boat outside his Lafayette home but, threatened with fines for code violations, he looked to a local storage facility only to discover the high cost of storage and restrictions of longer-term contracts.

Knowing he was not the only one facing these frustrations he began to look for a different solution. As he researched it dawned on him that there are empty spaces all over neighborhoods so why not rent the unused space your neighbor might have in their garage, barn or on their driveway, shed or even storage closet? Winter says this makes Stash-It a local, green, efficient solution to self-storage taking advantage of storage space that exists already, rather than paving over dirt.

Winter acknowledged that it is easy to love your own idea, but says that everyone he spoke to also loved it. "Stash-It solves a problem," he says. "Many startups today are a solution looking for a problem."

About three years ago Winter hired Stash-It President Jeremy Hass. Together they explored the concept further, looking at the process of contract, examining nuances around city ordinances and developed the platform that could break into the \$32 billion storage industry. The company launched its working product last year.

Stash-It's goal is transparency with hosts and Stash-It users. Rates are established upfront, agreed between both parties with 20% retained by Stash-It to keep the platform up and running. Mandatory background checks are done on all hosts. Both parties are present during the storage drop off and pictures are taken of contents to be stored and uploaded to the app.

With hosts and users currently in California, Texas, Ohio and Tennessee, Winter says Stash-It is growing monthly at a rate of 100%. He points out, "As a host, who wouldn't want to make a little money with their empty garage? And as a Stash-It user, who wouldn't want a personal, local storage space for their extra stuff?"

More information is available at www.stashitselfstorage.com/

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[back](#)

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