

Tool-lending library opens in Carbondale

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Colleagues Ari Jihan and Jessica Allee began the grand opening of the Carbondale Tool-Lending Library on Saturday by cutting a ribbon, but by sawing through a wooden board with the word "share" painted on it.

The library, located at 214 N. Washington St. at the rear of the Yover Infoshop, provides students and community members with free access to tools. Renters must fill out a borrowing application and release form and watch a 10-minute safety video. Rentals last a week and the library's hours are Monday and Wednesday 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9 to 11 a.m.

Jessica Allee, co-founder of the Carbondale Tool Library, talks about the newly created project Saturday at the Yover Infoshop. "I felt like there was a need in our community to share," Allee said. "I wanted to build on that, I wanted to give back." She said this is the second tool library in Illinois. "There is no money transfer in tool libraries," Allee said. "It's all about giving." Allee said there were two tool libraries in the San Francisco area, which is what influenced the San Diego native to open one in Carbondale. — April 30, 2016, Carbondale, Ill.

"In Carbondale there are a whole lot of students who do not have a lot of income," said Jessica Allee, who co-founded the library with Jihan. "There's also a history of low-income families in the area.

Allee said the price of tools deters many in the community from maintaining their homes. Now, people can rent carpentry, home-repair, power and select hand tools, she said.

"If you only have a small network of friends and family, it can be difficult to borrow tools," she said. "It's about getting everyone to participate in [sharing] tools."

Allee hopes that by inviting students and community members to borrow and share tools, Carbondale will experience revitalization.

Jihan has similar aspirations for the project.

"A major facet of this project is to break the barriers money creates," Jihan said. "It will help people do home improvement much easier."

Jihan and Allee said they want to eventually expand the lending library to include kitchen equipment and other items.

Those interested in the tool library can contact 415-637-9982 or carbondaletoollibrary@gmail.com

The previous version of this story listed the incorrect hours and misstated details about library operations.

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