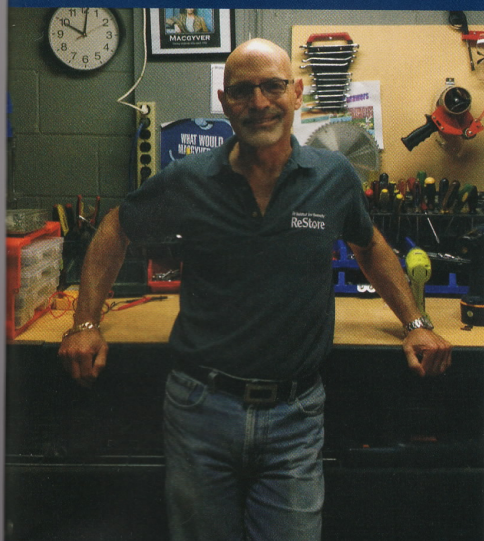


Louis Bannet

- First joined RBC in 1973
- Retired in 2012
- Role prior to retirement: Document Management Support, Toronto



At his workbench at ReStore.

"We prevent things from being thrown in dumps. By rejuvenating and repairing, less things are thrown out. It's really great for a city's green footprint."

Mr. Fix It to the Rescue

If you worked for RBC in the 1970s, Louis Bannet was just the kind of colleague you wanted to know.

Now that he's retired, he's still a reliable and knowledgeable go-to-guy.

Louis is a tinkerer-extraordinaire. So when he joined RBC he knew he'd landed his dream job. "I tested all the machines the bank bought," he recalls. "Faxes, calculators, copiers, typewriters – any electro-mechanical machine you could think of." He also invented the first automatic credit-card machine tester for Chargex imprinters. He worked in what was called the industrial engineering department and in addition to his regular job, was the man to see when machines stopped working.

For the past five years, Louis' fascination with fixing things has been transferred to two worthy causes: Habitat for Humanity and Repair Café Toronto. "My whole life I've tinkered, fixed and repaired to make things work again," admits Louis. When he retired and didn't know what to do, his wife Mary suggested ReStore, the retail outlet for Habitat for Humanity. The store accepts donations of appliances, lighting and other gently used household items, all of which benefit from Louis' repairs. He spends three days a week at ReStore, ensuring the donated items are in good working order. Not only are they then sold to the public, with proceeds directed towards building affordable homes, thousands of tonnes of re-usable household items go to new owners instead of landfill.

For this Mr. Fix it though (even his license plate reads "Fixxit"), three days a week wasn't enough. Repair Café Toronto filled the void. The volunteer organization, part of a network of around 1,200 Repair Cafés worldwide, takes recycling to a new level. They invite the public to bring broken or non-working items to libraries and community centres around the city, where volunteer fixers like Louis get them working again. "We prevent things from being thrown in dumps," explains Louis who volunteers up to two Saturdays a month. "By rejuvenating and repairing, less things are thrown out. It's really great for a city's green footprint."

Typically, each Repair Café event attracts about one hundred people. Success rates are high. Seventy per cent of visitors return home with restored lamps, record players, vacuum cleaners and blow dryers. Importantly, the volunteers also walk visitors through the repair process so they can do it themselves next time. "We show them what was wrong and get them to help with the repair so they learn something new," explains Louis.

Rescuing items from the trash heap has always given Louis great satisfaction. And these days, that satisfaction is compounded, knowing that fixing things is contributing to his community, helping new homeowners realize their dreams, and making his city a greener space.

Find locations near you: www.habitat.ca/restore and www.repaircafe.org/en/visit



Louis saves the day for this little boy: "He was devastated over his broken electronic car but he went home happy."