

*Pollution is just an untapped resource.*

— Buckminster Fuller

*Meghan and Aaron Powers built their home almost completely from recycled and salvaged materials.*

truck tailgates to make a deck rail, and he hung a Mazda RX7 rear windshield over the back door as an awning. Determined to use some part from a Volvo, which he calls “the badge of Berkeley,” Karl lined up two of the Swedish car’s doors side by side to make a stair railing.

In Victor, Idaho, Meghan and Aaron Powers built their 836-square-foot home almost completely from materials they found in local landfills and demolition sites. They scoured their area’s dumps — “about the only place we didn’t look for stuff was the dead animal pit,” Meghan said — and gathered appliances, doors, windows, floor tiles, garage doors, chimney pipe, granite countertops, corrugated steel ceiling and roofing, and lumber. Using salvage was the only way the couple, determined to avoid a construction loan, could afford to build a home — and it was an important part of their efforts to reduce their impact. “It hit us that the biggest way we could practice green building was first by reducing — figuring out how small a space we could realistically live in — and then finding as many ways to reuse materials as possible,” Meghan said.

Meghan Powers

