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### Shared Workspace, With No Pressure to Buy Coffee

The urban phenomenon of shared office space for start-ups is slowly creeping into the suburbs with the introduction of The Purple Crayon's program The Inc.

By [Lizzie Hedrick](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 13, 2011

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Often the reality of working from home doesn't quite live up to the idea. There are constant distractions—like pets and family members—and it can be harder to motivate oneself to get serious work done when still wearing pajamas and a bathrobe at 2 p.m.

In cities like New York and Washington D.C., shared workspaces for independent professionals and start-up companies are becoming a trend; while here in the suburbs, there is little alternative to the home office or coffee shop.

"According to a study conducted by the [Non-Profit Centers Network](#), 56 percent of tenants in shared workspaces reported substantial improvement in their effectiveness and efficiency as a result of working in a shared space," said Hastings resident and [Purple Crayon Center](#) executive director Sarah Hinawi.

This year, [The Purple Crayon](#) launched as a Hastings-based non-profit organization that aims to help teens and adults harness their creativity and actualize their goals. [The Inc.](#)—one of The Purple Crayon's flagship programs—offers shared workspace for anyone working independently on socially responsible projects.

"We were inspired by the idea of making it easier for freelancers and entrepreneurs—especially in this economy, where it can be so difficult to succeed doing socially responsible work," Hinawi said. "I was thinking about moms trying to re-enter the work force after having kids...there's only so far your business can grow if you're taking your conference calls in the car."

Sarah Hinawi and her husband Adel renovated the Purple Church on Main Street to serve as a haven for teens and adults who are passionate about enacting change, but grappling with how exactly to meet their goals.

"I find professionals may have an expertise in one area—like education or the environment—but be deficient in the areas of business infrastructure, like: marketing and database management," Hinawi said. "We leverage the shared-space environment here to collaborate on ideas and bring in consultants."

The Inc. offers both permanent desks and "hot desk" membership packages, which allow individuals to plug in their laptops in a quiet, professional environment—without the expense or unwanted caffeine high of working in coffee shops.

Permanent desks are rented out on a monthly basis—and the price includes weekly meetings with Hinawi, who has an expertise in non-profit management, on what members can do to improve their businesses.

Hot desk membership is also offered on a monthly basis, and includes: free WiFi and access to a printer, copier and fax machine. There are also

conference rooms, where members can meet with colleagues or clients.

"I think it's so important to have face-to-face interaction with co-workers and other people throughout the work day," Hinawi said. "And so many essential meetings don't happen because start-up businesses don't have the space."

Shared workspaces like—[Hive at 55](#) in New York—are popping up left and right in urban centers, but the concept is still still somewhat foreign here in the suburbs.

"People don't realize how nice this space is until they come and see it for themselves," Hinawi said. "But when they do, most say, 'Wow, I want to live here.'"

The Purple Crayon center is located at 52 Main Street in Hastings-on-Hudson. Find more information about The Inc. [here](#) on The Purple Crayon's website.

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