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# D.C. trip inspires center and shop for activists

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## D.C. trip inspires center and shop for activists

By DANIEL STURM

When Natasha Bancroft participated in a rally in Washington against the World Bank last fall, she was happy to find a quiet space, where she could take a break from the turmoil. A nearby church had turned part of its building into a welcome center for the demonstrators.

When Bancroft returned from the rally, this idea of meeting place stayed with her. And after much planning, on Friday, Aug. 8, the information center and community meeting space, Brighter Days Infoshop, will open its doors. Organized by Bancroft and friends, the Brighter Days Infoshop will be run by members of Direct Action, a group supporting social change through creative and radical political action. The shop is at 1914 E. Michigan Ave., near Clemens Street, on Lansing's east side.

Bancroft said infoshops cooperatively run spaces, oriented towards social liberation and the cultivation of revolutionary thought and education. She said the Lansing infoshop was modeled after the Chicago-based "Azone," which also provides information on the concept of infoshops on its Web site, [www.azone.org](http://www.azone.org).

The 1999 Everett High School graduate, who works at nearby Theio's Restaurant, said that Brighter Days Infoshop aims to fill a gap by providing community activists with a much needed permanent meeting place to exchange ideas. Bancroft said Direct Action has been meeting at the Michigan State University Union but wasn't able to store any files or books there.

On Aug. 12 Direct Action plans to hold its first weekly meeting in the new building. Bancroft said that in addition to a small library that will be open to the public, Direct Action will also have an office area for files and administrative work and a backroom suited for art projects and classes on anything from stained glass, to the history of democracy and anarchism.

In the last year Bancroft, who lives in an apartment above the center, has built a collection of 300 books ranging in subject from sociology and popular culture to anti-consumerism. The infoshop will lend and sell books, focusing on topics such as the prison system, racism, political dissent, and anti-capitalism. The 25-year-old director said she wants to offer literature that mainstream bookstores don't carry. "You might be able to order these books from Barnes & Noble, but who wants to buy from them anyway, when you can get them cheaper through us?" she said.

The infoshop will also sell T-shirts, buttons, stickers, magazines and locally made jewelry and art. Other funding will

come from a monthly \$25 membership fee for voting members of the collective, who will in return receive free admission to events, and a 10 percent discount on merchandise. Non-voting members pay \$5. Anton Bollen, a MSU freshman, said they hope more Lansing residents will chip in money, so they can guarantee the survival of the project. Infoshop volunteers have distributed fliers in Lansing's Eastside neighborhood to inform residents about the shop.

Quinn Ostrom, an Eastern High School senior and infoshop volunteer, said the shop will not only serve as a resource center, but will also host guest lectures, open mikes and concerts. The 17-year-old East Lansing resident pointed out that except for nearby MAC's Bar, which offers Sunday afternoon shows to under age audiences, Lansing has virtually no all-ages venues.

Bancroft, Ostrom and Bollen said that donations would be appreciated to make their dream of a community center become a reality. They're also searching for office equipment, including computer supplies, bookshelves, chairs, couches, filing cabinets, a stereo and posters.

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