

Home for the Holidays

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SHOP LOCAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS | WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

A family experience

If you like to shop with kids or elderly family members, then the madness accompanying

Black Friday or even Thanksgiving night shopping at major retailers might not be for you.

A stroll down to your friendly downtown establishment for a more laid-back experience may be what you're looking for this year. Shopping locally provides this.

Even in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, you are likely to find friendly, personalized service at the local business level. This is because you probably know your small business owner by name and can even tell people about their background.

The typical small business in America depends on this kind of connection with its customers. What better way to teach your children about the hard work, communication and store loyalty than by taking them to your favorite local store and talking shop with the owner?

Teach the value of money

Here is shopping exercise to try with your youngsters:

- Give them \$10 to buy a locally produced, locally sold item for a sibling or friend.

- Provide a list of five local businesses from which they are allowed to make their purchase.

- Take them to the store and let them pick out the item.

- Discuss all of the important lessons that can be learned from the experience, including supporting your local economy, providing more jobs and contributing to causes.

Children can learn through your example of shopping locally. And who knows? You may just be creating another community-minded, small business customer for life.

A better shopping experience

If you're taking an elderly adult out shopping with you this season, one of the best options to give them a positive experience is by shopping locally.

If they have been in your community for a long period of time, undoubtedly they will run into friends, neighbors or family members while you're out on the town.

Slow down and have a leisurely morning of shopping. Stop by your local coffeehouse before you make your trek downtown. Take in some conversation while you peruse the aisles of your favorite boutiques. Work together to whittle down your shopping list while also wrapping yourselves up in the spirit of shopping locally for Christmas.

