

This Holiday Make Your Gifts Fresh, Urban, Local



Local Hip Hop businesses offer gift ideas that can benefit the local economy.

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner

Holiday shoppers have more choice than ever this season, if they want to support our local community, as well as find the perfect gifts for family and friends. From holiday marketplaces and downtown popup shops to locally-owned Internet stores, there are plenty of places to find urban apparel, jewelry, books and gifts of all kinds.

"If you shop online, you should be shopping at Café Give," says Ketan Sampat, founder of the CaféGive.com website that gives a percentage of everything you spend to a good cause of your choice. "We have lots of Portland nonprofits on our list: Transition Projects, Friends of the Children, I have a Dream Foundation Oregon, Friends of Trees, The Children's Relief Nursery..."

In fact, those are just a few of 142 nonprofits that benefit from Café Give. If you buy through Café Give from Powell's Books, for example, 5 percent of what you spend will be donated to the nonprofit you choose to support. More than 350 retailers have partnered with Café Give, including sports companies like Adidas, Columbia Sportswear, Vans, Reebok, REI, Lucy and Patagonia; and major retailers like Macy's, Nordstrom, Walgreens, Kohls, Lancome and Benefit.

Also online, you can find urban apparel at The Hip Hop Junkies, founded by former NFL player and PSU grad Niyi Sobo with his business partner Bobby Jones. With the motto, "For the Love of Hip Hop," the online store (thehiphopjunkies.com), offers unique locally designed tee-shirts from \$17, along with sweatshirts at \$45 and snapbacks at \$40. Check out their frequently updated product line and entertaining online magazine, which features new music videos from both Northwest and nationally known rap artists.

If you're looking for edgy streetwear, Rum and Koke (rumandkoke.com) has beanies, tees and hoodies (\$17 to \$44), designed by Portland-based Hayley Bauske. Or if pure shea butter and natural perfume oils are more your style, check out Shamika Bishop's products at her website Xoulaxation.com.

And buying online is also a good way to support your local hip hop artists. Tickets to shows featuring local artists are just one way to show your love. Support Luck One by gifting tickets to his Dec. 29 performance at Holocene. Or support Cool Nutz and the Jus Family artists by downloading their tunes from vinylfluidrecords.com.

To buy urban apparel in person, Cool Nutz recommends Capital Brand, which has a store located on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. at Knott Street. Capital Brand offers tee-shirts for \$25, snap-back hats with RARE emblazoned over the bill (\$65), and buttons.

Or head to the Martin Luther King Jr. Fashion Plaza, 8900 N. Vancouver Ave., where 'Top to Bottom,' carries streetwear for everybody's budget. You'll find jeans, dickies, stilettos, Chuck Taylors, snapbacks and hoodies: all at affordable prices.

Upper Playground at 23 NW 5th Ave. also stocks a wide range of urban clothing and accessories. Upper Playground offers snapbacks at \$45, men's hoodies from \$60 to \$120, bandanas from \$10 and women's bags from \$20. At Compound, 107 N.W. 5th, you'll also find women's and men's urban gear: from NIKE Air Max Juniors at \$160 to The Hundreds brand snapbacks at \$34.

Find books, clothing, bags and jewelry at the African American Holiday Marketplace set up in Reflections Café and bookstore, 446 N.E. Killingsworth Street. S. Renee Mitchell offers a range of African-inspired gifts, while Gloria Cash's jewelry showcases her signature gold and pearls.

Online or in person, you'll find more ways than ever to support the community

Multnomah County Enlists Faith Leaders for Healthy Foods Plan

Over half of Multnomah County adults and one in four children are overweight or obese.

"Sugar is the number one drug in America," says Bishop Stephen Holt of The International Fellowship Family.

Last Thursday, Multnomah County faith leaders gathered at the Life Change Christian Center to sign a new food and beverage policy, promising to promote healthy eating, water consumption and fewer sugar-sweetened beverages.

The new policy recommends that all events held in buildings owned by the participating faith congregations provide refreshments including healthy alternatives to promote healthy food and beverages as the right choice.

This is part of the larger Center for Disease Control Healthy Communities ACHIEVE Initiative, which in Multnomah County has been led in part by Pastor Will Hardy of Highland Christian Center.

Unhealthy eating habits have been tied into Black culture dating back to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Enslaved populations were given limited choices — often the food the masters wouldn't eat — for their diet. This became known as soul food.

Although eating these foods was a survival technique, the practice has endured. Many events in black communities are catered with fatty foods, as well as sugary beverages.

Even though these unhealthy eating practices are not a part of the cultures in African countries, they have an impact on African immigrants as well.

According to Abd'Fahidh Ibn'Abdullah, the Amir of the Muslim Community

Center of Portland, this ties into American consumer culture.

"Once immigrants become Americanized they adopt the consumer excess lifestyle," he says. "We have to counter that effort. It's part of our tenants and beliefs and good for the well being of the community at large."

Reverend Dr. LeRoy Haynes Jr. of Allen Temple added that prevention has the greatest impact on health.

In 2004, former Surgeon General Richard Carmona testified that this may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy due to increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical

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inactivity.

"This initiative is way overdue," says Bishop C.T. Wells of Emmanuel Temple Church. "It does us no good talking about the spiritual man without the physical man."

Pastor Matt Hennessee of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church says his participation is a matter of personal growth.

"If you had asked me ten years ago I wouldn't do it," he says. "Now I'm a recovering sweet-aholic. I've seen far too many deaths. There are far too many pharmaceutical investments due to the cooking style."

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