



Holiday Gift Guide

CLARENDON MERCHANT SALES

BLACK FRIDAY
& **SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY!**

NOVEMBER 27 & 28

SHOP LOCAL - SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Shop locally this holiday season

Shopping local this holiday season can benefit your community in various ways.

Shopping is a big part of the holiday season, when families and friends gather to reconnect and exchange gifts. While the popularity of shopping online has grown, such practices are not always eco-friendly or timely, as gifts bought online must be packaged and shipped, wasting valuable resources and time that last-minute shoppers may not have.

The benefits of shopping locally go beyond convenience and the chance to reduce your carbon footprint. The following are a few ways that shopping locally this holiday season can directly benefit

your community and the people who call it home.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Local small businesses go a long way toward creating a neighborhood identity, and that identity can create a stronger sense of community among you and your neighbors. In addition, a unique community identity can make your town more attractive to outsiders, and that appeal can improve the value of local real estate while also attracting more people to local businesses in your neighborhood.

LOCAL ECONOMY

When men and women shop locally, they are putting money

back into their local communities. Local small businesses may be owned by your neighbors, and it can be comforting to know that your holiday shopping dollars are going to support a neighbor instead of a large corporation. Local businesses also employ your neighbors, so shopping local can strengthen the local economy by creating jobs that may not exist if you and members of your community fail to support local small businesses.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The accessibility of customer service is another oft-overlooked benefit of shopping locally. When buying from national chains, especially during the holiday season



when such businesses may be overwhelmed with orders, making contact with customer service departments can be a trying exercise. In addition, buying locally makes it more convenient for friends and family members who also live in your community to return their gifts.

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SHOP LOCAL - CELEBRATING AMIDST COVID

How to host virtual holiday celebrations

The 2020 holiday season figures to be vastly different than seasons past. COVID-19 has transformed daily life in many ways. The public has become accustomed to wearing masks while shopping, limiting the number of people in public venues and keeping their distance from friends and loved ones. For those with large families or people with inherent risk factors that make them more susceptible to illness, sharing the holidays over video conferencing apps may be the safest way to go in 2020.

The following tips can help holiday hosts make the most of a virtual holiday experience.

- Pick a bright, festive spot: Set up your tablet, smartphone or computer in a bright area with a festive backdrop. You'll want others

who join the virtual hangout to be able to see you clearly. A Christmas tree or a decorated fireplace in the background can set the scene.

- Choose the right conferencing app: Certain programs may work better than others depending on your needs. For example, if everyone has the same operating system platform (iOS or Android), you may be able to use an app inherent to that system, which won't require a separate download or login.

- Keep props nearby: If the goal is to open gifts virtually, be sure to have everyone



gathered and gifts nearby so no one is scrambling in and out of view.

- Position the camera at eye level: Try to set up the camera so you're not looking up or down. Practice looking straight into the camera instead of at yourself in the minimized window or even others on the screen. This way you'll appear engaged.

- Use mute when not speaking:

Muting yourself (and encouraging others to do the same) when you are not speaking will limit the amount of background noise. As the host, serve

as the moderator and encourage everyone to speak one at a time. Choose a visual cue to signal when someone has the floor to speak, such as raising a hand or even showing a festive picture.

- Tune into virtual worship: While some places of worship have reopened to some capacity, others may still be offering hybrid services. If your place of worship offers services via YouTube or another video platform, gather around and watch together and participate just as if you were there in person.

- Share dinner "together": Set up your camera so it captures the holiday table. All parties gathering virtually can then sit down to the holiday meal as one and enjoy one of the season's more endearing traditions.

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Christmas in Clarendon

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SHOP LOCAL - SUPPORT CHARITIES

Businesses give back

Information from the Small Business Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs says that small businesses, or firms with fewer than 500 workers, accounted for 99.7 of businesses in 2016, the most recent year for data. Firms with fewer than 100 workers accounted for 98.2 percent of companies.

Thanks to their influence and reach, small businesses have the potential to impact local communities in numerous ways.

- Small businesses employ local residents. According to the SBA's Office of Advocacy, small businesses accounted for 61.8 percent of net new jobs in the United States between 1993 and 2016.

- Small businesses are innovative. The SBA notes that small businesses represent about 96 percent of employer firms in high-patenting manufacturing industries. That suggests that small businesses are full of new ideas.

- Small businesses support local charities. Many local businesses give to charity, particularly local charities. Some donate money while others may offer their professional services or event spaces, each of which can be particularly helpful to local communities.

- Small businesses contribute



to community identity. Small businesses contribute to the charm and character of a town or city. Many local businesses make up the fabric of Main Street, and towns are known and loved for the businesses that have endured.

- Small businesses help the environment. Shopping locally means consumers do not have to travel far to get their goods and services. The United States Environmental Protection Agency's research report on walkable downtown centers found small businesses encourage walking and cycling, helping to reduce air pollution from vehicles.

- Small businesses keep money in communities. Local businesses keep disposable income and tax money within their communities. Business tax money remains local and can support schools, roads and municipal services.

Local small businesses are the life force that keeps cities and towns prosperous and humming along. Such establishments help build a sense of community and forge lasting relationships.



Totally Locally is an initiative adopted by the Chamber of Commerce to promote all things local about Clarendon and Donley County.

Totally Locally encourages you to step through the door of that shop you go past every day. Give it a try – there's a good chance you'll want to go back.

Most of all though it's about people who care about what they do, what they grow, what they make, and ultimately the people they sell it to. It's about buying, playing, working, and living **Totally Locally**.

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SHOP LOCAL - ENJOY FRIENDSHIPS

Spread the Word

Know a great local business? Don't be silent about it. Small businesses need your help, so open up and help spread the word any time you're impressed by a locally owned shop.

NOTICE THE DETAILS

In many ways, it's the small things that make the best local shops stand out. They might greet their frequent customers by name, stock products that no other stores offer, donate their time and money to worthy local causes and provide a more unique shopping experience that the cookie-cutter chain stores can't match.

Look for these things when you're out shopping, and let your friends know when you find them. You'll be helping your friends out and doing your part to keep your favorite businesses open and thriving.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest have opened new doors for spreading the word about your favorite businesses. In fact, online is where a lot of word-of-mouth marketing happens these days as friends share and photograph their everyday shopping trips — for better or worse.

If you run across a local business that's doing a great job, snap a picture or write a post about it. A few good words on social media can have a positive impact for the "shop local" movement in your community.

IT MATTERS

Studies have shown that buyers trust recommendations from their friends and family far more than they do messages from strangers. Your opinion carries a lot of weight with the people you know, so you can play a big role in helping people avoid the bad shops and flock to the good ones.

So this Christmas, don't do your shopping in a communications vacuum. Look for the best products and experiences in your community this holiday season and share them with the people around you.

Your friends — and some small-business owners — will thank you.



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SHOP LOCAL - CONTROL YOUR FINANCES

Set and Stick to a Holiday Budget

The chance to give gifts and spend time with loved ones makes the holiday season a special time of year. But for many people, the holiday season often leads to overspending.

A 2016 survey from the American Research Group found that American shoppers anticipated spending an average of \$930 on gifts that holiday season. Data from T. Rowe Price confirms that parents are spending between \$400 and \$500 per child each year. In 2015, CPA Canada conducted a random phone survey of 1,004 adult Canadians and found the average adult planned to spend \$766 on holiday gifts.

Although these numbers can reflect an overwhelming sense of generosity, many times excessive spending is based on a desire to outdo gifting from the year prior - sometimes at the risk of personal finances. Some people are taking drastic measures to make holidays over-the-top, with some delving into emergency savings while others withdraw prematurely from retirement

accounts. Budgeting for the holiday season can help shoppers keep their finances in check.

DETERMINE SPENDING PATTERNS

An examination of receipts and spending habits from previous holiday seasons can help individuals establish budgets for the current year. Make a list of all expenses - even the ones that extend beyond holiday giving. These may include expenses such as gym service fees, homeowner's insurance, traveling expenses, gift exchanges at work, and more. Extra costs can add up and should be factored into holiday budgets.

Try to recall if your spending last year felt comfortable or if you were paying off credit cards long after the holiday season had ended. If it's the latter, resolve to make adjustments.

SET A BUDGET THAT FITS

There is no such thing as a one-

size-fits-all budget. Figure out if there is extra money this season or if times are tight. This will help you plan accordingly and avoid overspending. Shifting priorities can help free up some cash. If children are interested in this year's hot (and likely expensive) gift, cut back on holiday travel or entertaining. Instead of buying gifts for coworkers, buy a drink during a night out.

USE THE HOLIDAYS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SELL

Collectibles, gently used toys, video games, action figures - all of these items may be collecting dust at your home, but they might be coveted by other shoppers. Rely on the season for spending to make some extra income that can be cashed in for your own holiday purchases.

TRACK SPENDING

Establish a separate account strictly for



holiday spending. This can include a credit card only used for gifts and entertaining or a savings account at a bank or credit union. You won't know what is going out of your account unless you keep careful tabs on it. Tracking spending is the biggest key to sticking with a budget.

Holiday budgeting can be challenging. But with some effort, it is possible to avoid debt and still enjoy a happy holiday season.

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SHOP LOCAL - TAKE CARE OF FAMILY

Help isolated loved ones this holiday

A phenomenon called “cabin fever” tends to set in around late autumn or in midwinter. Long hours of darkness coupled with cold, inclement weather often is a recipe for increased time spent indoors. For people who live alone, the effects of cabin fever might be more pronounced.



In addition to seasonal cabin fever, this year another factor comes into play: social distancing and voluntary quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Even those who may venture outside to socialize, particularly around the holiday season, may be hesitant or unable to do so to help prevent the spread of the virus. In these instances, friends and loved ones can mitigate feelings of isolation in various ways.

- Schedule video chats. Video conferencing apps have become the communication vehicles of choice during the era of social distancing. Different applications and services continue to evolve and help people stay in touch. Plan regular chats, either once or twice per week with isolated or vulnerable people. Try to organize a large group chat on the holiday itself so no one has to spend Christmas or Chanukah alone.

- Drop off supplies. Even though supermarket shop-from-home and other delivery services have normalized somewhat since the start of the pandemic, treat individuals who may be isolated to some personalized attention. Put together care packages of supplies or holiday treats and deliver them in person so you can see the smiles that result from being able to visit with

someone familiar.

- Send uplifting messages. Children or even adults can make personalized cards and mail them to loved ones at home or those who may be in long-term care facilities. Send new mailings every week or two so that residents always have something to look forward to in the mail.

- Start a virtual club. A book club or another shared interest can be the catalyst for more frequent communication. A club puts everyone on the same page and enables them to come together, via phone or video chat, for a discussion.

- Ask for help learning a new skill. Along the same vein as a virtual club, lessons on everything from woodworking to crochet to making favorite holiday recipes can be conducted online. Give an isolated individual daily purpose and distraction by engaging him or her with online lessons.

Isolation and feelings of loneliness can affect anyone who normally suffers from cabin fever. However, this year it may be more pronounced, as it could be coupled with social distancing precautions that have already been in effect for some time.

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SHOP LOCAL - KIDS IN NEED

Visit The Angel Tree

The economic circumstance of parents shouldn't keep children from experiencing the joy of having a gift to open on Christmas morning. Thanks to a local program, you can help make sure every kid has a Merry Christmas.

Angel Tree applications are currently available at Keith Floyd's shop caddy-cornered from the courthouse. Kids ages 12 and under, who might not otherwise have Christmas, are eligible for this program. The application period will close November 30, 2020.

Angels are on the tree now and available for adoption. Go by Keith's shop and select an Angel that you can provide a gift to this Christmas. For more information, contact at 874-2007.



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Christmas in Clarendon



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SHOP LOCAL - MANAGE YOUR MONEY



Smart ways to pay for gifts

Entertaining, dinners, gifts, travel, and decorating may make for a festive time of year, but the holidays certainly can put a strain on personal finances. No one wants to experience a financial hangover come January. Therefore, making a plan for paying for holiday expenditures now can help the average person save and protect their finances.

Figuring out how to finance holiday purchases can be just as important as scoping out deals and cashing in coupons. Here's a look at some of the ways to pay for holiday gifts.

CREDIT CARDS

Many consumers feel that credit cards are the safest way to make purchases, whether in-store or online. With credit cards, shoppers are using a line of credit. Should fraudulent purchases be made or errors in accounting occur, shoppers aren't responsible - the credit card company is in charge of tracking down or absorbing the error.

Now that spending has increased after the last recession, credit card companies are again offering deals to lure in new customers. Rewards cards are quite popular. Such cards offer points, cash back or travel miles to customers who meet certain criteria. For those who can pay off balances and meet the requirements, these cards can

help save substantial amounts of money. Keep in mind that regular cards carry an interest rate of 15 percent on average, while retail store cards may be as high as 24 percent.

LAYAWAY

Layaway is a safe way to shop for the holidays. Layaway entitles consumers to buy an item by making installment payments. The frequency of payments depends on shoppers' ability to pay. Failure to pay will not affect a credit score or negatively impact credit standing in any way - the consumer may just lose their down payment or be forced to pay a layaway fee. Paying in installments helps lock in a special sale rate and can discourage impulse buying as well.

CASH AND PREPAID CARDS

Paying in cash can help shoppers avoid overspending on gifts. After setting aside a cash limit, once the money is spent, shopping is done. Paying in cash does carry some risk if the money is stolen or misplaced. Plus, as opposed to paying with credit, which can offer some purchase protection or built-in warranties, cash may have no protective benefits.

As an alternative to cash, consumers may want to purchase pre-loaded cash cards in various amounts. Like cash, when the value on the card is depleted, shopping is finished.

SHOP LOCAL - NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Don't Be A Stranger

There is no place like home, so why would you choose to leave it for Christmas shopping? By spending your time and money shopping locally, you are more likely to run into friends, family, co-workers and past acquaintances, allowing you to enjoy the season around those you love.

Both behind the counter and in the aisles, you will probably know more people within your local businesses in comparison to the stores 60 miles away. Familiar faces and friendly chats help enrich the already exciting experience of Christmas shopping.

TEACH THE KIDS

It's never too early to pass on the values that drive you to shop local and support your neighbors. Your sons, daughters, nieces and nephews will earn money and shop for themselves one day, and they may even be future small business owners.

Bringing them along for the shopping trip to your favorite downtown store will give them a

great understanding of the benefits of spending money locally and may spark an entrepreneurial spirit within them.

LEARN HISTORY

The next time you are perusing through a downtown business, ask yourself if you know the history of the building you are in. Odds are the owner does.

Small business owners are often excellent sources for local history. They can give you detailed information about their buildings or the services that used to be offered through it.

Shopping locally doesn't just enhance the local economy. It can also increase your knowledge of your surroundings.



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SHOP LOCAL - GIVE LOCAL

Giving a little more this holiday season

The holiday season is a time of giving. The generosity on display during the holiday season may not have an official start date, but the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving Day may be the unofficial beginning of the giving season.

The first Tuesday following American Thanksgiving has been referred to as Giving Tuesday since 2012. The event was started by the 92nd Street Y in New York City, the United Nations Foundation and the technology website Mashable as a response to the commercialization of the holiday season and the rampant consumerism that seems to start as soon as the last bite of turkey is digested. Today, Giving Tuesday harnesses the generosity of millions

of people around the world and helps millions of dollars to find its way into the coffers of organizations that need it most. Giving Tuesday inspires people to volunteer or give back to causes that are near and dear to their hearts.

Thanks to technology, giving has the capacity to go viral and inspire others to engage in their own charitable efforts. Since its inception, Giving Tuesday has evolved. The event now underscores how communities can harness the power of people working

together to elicit great change.

Even though Giving Tuesday may be the catalyst for charitable efforts, it doesn't need to end there. People are urged to be generous all year long, including throughout the holiday season. Here are some seasonally specific ways to give back a little more.

- Pay it forward by treating someone behind you in the checkout line to coffee, fast food, a candy bar, or whatever else suits you at the time. Perhaps he or she will do the same and

keep the generosity going.

- Keep extra dollars in your pocket and be generous to charities seeking donations outside of stores. A cup of coffee or hot chocolate goes a long way toward warming up the people manning the collection pots as well.

- Adopt a family who is less fortunate and purchase some gifts on their wish list. Many community centers and churches have contacts for needy families who could use some support this season.

Giving can be the focus of the holiday season, and in ways that are meaningful to the people on the receiving end of the generosity.



The #GIVINGTUESDAY PANHANDLE GIVES

Money donated to the Donley County Community Fund benefits local non-profit organizations.

Your donation from November 23 through December 1 will be increased through a match from the Amarillo Area Foundation.

Please write your check to The Panhandle Gives, with DonleyCCF written on the memo line and mail to:

Donley County Community Fund
c/o Jacob Fangman
PO Box 906
Clarendon, TX 79226

DONLEY COUNTY COMMUNITY FUND
AN AFFILIATE FUND OF THE AMARILLO AREA FOUNDATION

Shop Small First

Christmas in Clarendon

SHOP LOCAL - GIVE LOCAL

Don't Forget Non-Profits

Some local organizations are focused not on selling products, but on improving the lives of disadvantaged community members. Non-profit groups organizations are all seeking help this holiday season.

And what they're asking for is simply a hand. They need more manpower to achieve their goals and spread the word on their efforts.

LOCAL FOOD DONATIONS

Why not spend your Christmas spreading some holiday cheer – and delicious food? Contact the Clarendon First United Methodist Church about the volunteer needs of its local **BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY** at 874-3667. Contact the Clarendon Lions Club to make a donation to its **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BASKET** program at 874-2259. Call Clarendon Elementary School at 874-3855 about its **SNACK PAK 4 KIDS** program or call 874-2007 to make a donation or volunteer to help the weekly **CHRIST'S KIDS MINISTRY PROGRAM** as it seeks to nourish the bodies and spirits of local children. And it is a simple act of kindness that can be turned into a tradition, passed on to children or replicated by your friends and family members. Senior citizens groups in Clarendon and Hedley also need your support to continue to provide services to our local elderly.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

You may find yourself short on time this holiday season, but maybe you have a few dollars to donate to a local organization. Your contribution could go a long way toward furthering the cause of a group near and dear to your heart.

You can conveniently make online donations or in-person cash contributions. Either way, donating funds is a simple way to show your support while making a difference in the lives of those who need it.

LENDING YOUR SKILL SET

Can you spare a few hours every weekend in December? You may be asked to run errands or visit with people. Maybe deliver food or products to clients across town.

Professionals in the creative services field can offer their skills free of charge as a holiday contribution. Locals helping locals will strengthen the community this holiday season.

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THEATRE

SHOP LOCAL - LIVE LOCAL

Cook Up Christmas Cheer

Holiday baking is a tradition that stretches through time. What person doesn't look forward to the treats the season brings? Cookies are often gifted to friends and family members, and they usually help complete the dessert offerings after the holiday meal.

Sugar cookies are an ideal holiday cookie because of their

versatility. They can be dressed-up however you see fit, whether iced, covered in sprinkles or enjoyed as they are dunked in hot cocoa. To make successful sugar cookies, try this triple-tested recipe courtesy of Monica Buck and Good Housekeeping.

SUGAR COOKIES

Yields 5 dozen cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, with mixer on low speed, beat butter and sugar until blended. Increase speed to high; beat until light and creamy. On low speed, beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in

flour, baking powder and salt until blended.

2. Divide dough into 4 equal pieces; flatten each piece into a disk. Wrap each disk with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour or until dough is firm enough to roll. (Or place dough in freezer 30 minutes.)

3. On a lightly floured surface with a floured rolling pin, roll 1 piece of dough 1/8 inch thick. With floured 3-inch to 4-inch cookie cutters, cut dough into as many cookies as possible; wrap and refrigerate trimmings. Place cookies, 1 inch apart, on ungreased large

cookie sheet.

4. Bake cookies 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer cookies to wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining dough and trimmings.

5. When cookies are cool, decorate with frosting if you like; use along with sugars and candies to decorate cookies. Set cookies aside to allow frosting to dry completely, about 1 hour. Store in tightly covered container (with waxed paper between layers if decorated) at room temperature up to 2 weeks, or in freezer up to 3 months.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
½ cup sugar

1 large egg
1 tbsp vanilla extract

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt
Frosting (optional)

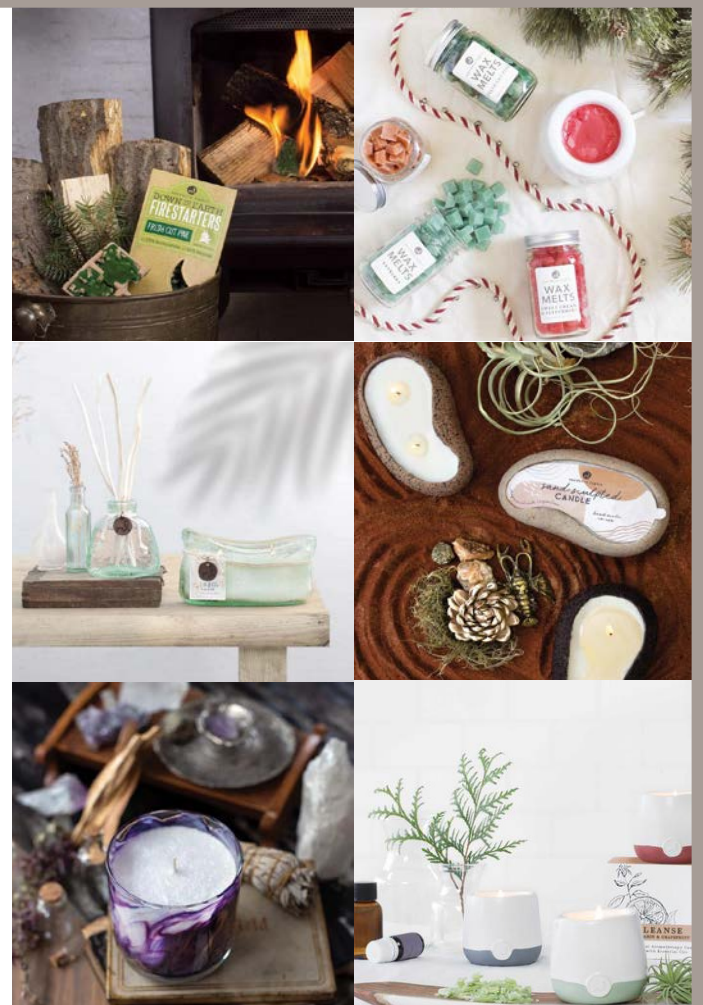
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SHOP LOCAL - ALL YEAR LONG

Shop Local Year Round

Sure, Christmas is a great time to shower your loved ones with locally bought gifts. But what about the other major holidays throughout the year?

Extend your yuletide joy to Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays and anniversaries for maximum impact on your local community and business owners.

Your effort in doing so may make more of a difference than you realize. A recent collaborative study by the Small Business Administration, United States Department of Labor and other major organizations found that small businesses employ about 77 million Americans and account for 65 percent of all new jobs over the past 17 years.

So by spending your money locally, you are helping keep your friends and neighbors employed during the holiday season and beyond!

Here are some of the other notable findings from the study:

- Eighty-nine percent of consumers agree that independent businesses contribute positively to local economies.
- Residential neighborhoods served by a successful independent business district gained, on average, 50 percent more in home values than their citywide markets.
- Independent retailers

return more than three times as much money per dollar of sales than chain competitors. Independent restaurants return more than two times as much money per dollar of sales than national restaurant chains.

- If independent businesses regained their 1990 market shares, it would create 200,000 new small businesses, generate nearly \$300 billion in revenues and employ more than 1.6 million American workers.
- If just half of the United States employed population spent \$50 each month at locally owned independent businesses, it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.
- For every square foot a local firm occupies, the local economy gains \$179, vs. \$105 for a chain store.



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Fun for the entire family!

AGES 3 & UP

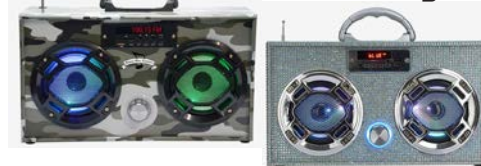


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SHOP LOCAL - MAKING MEMORIES

Make a Child's First Holiday Special

A baby's life is filled with milestones. First smiles, first steps and first words are just a few of the moments parents will treasure.



A baby's first holiday season is another special time to cherish. Shoppers seeking gifts to make a baby's first holiday special have many clever, cute and functional items to choose from. Several of these gifts can become keepsakes to be tucked into memory boxes for growing kids to look at later in life.

• Christmas pajamas: What better way to await for the arrival of Christmas than in a pair of snuggly pajamas? Send pajamas ahead of Christmas Day so that new parents will have plenty of adorable photo opportunities as their baby boy or girl tears open the gifts. Stores stock several different fun and festive prints, or look into pajamas that can be personalized.

• Photo print package: Photography packages can involve the entire expanding family and will catalog special moments in time. Purchase studio or on-location time with a private photographer, or use one of the popular photography chains found in malls and department stores.

• Personalized framed print: Commemorate the first holiday season with your child by getting a print made with his or her name and age. Leave a space on the print so that the child's parents can customize it even further with their son or daughter's footprints. Include a

matted frame and child-safe ink or paint to complete the gift.

• Keepsake ornament: Some families embrace the tradition of adding a new ornament to their Christmas trees each year. Purchase an ornament for the new baby with the year so he or she can join in the tradition.

• Crochet or knit blanket: Crafty individuals can make a blanket that the newest addition to the family can enjoy during the chilly days of winter. These blankets often become treasured keepsakes that may be passed down throughout the family or kept tucked away for kids so they can give them to their own children once they start their own families.

• Piggy bank: Foster good saving habits by gifting a personalized piggy bank. Get kids off on the right foot by depositing a few dollars into the bank before giving the gift.

A new baby brings many changes and fun experiences. Gift-givers can make a baby's first holiday season one filled with joy and whimsy with creative gift ideas.

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SHOP LOCAL - GIVE BACK LOCAL

How helping others helps you

Personal growth is at the heart of many New Year's resolutions. Few paths to positive personal growth are more noble than resolving to help others through increased acts of generosity and kindness.

According to Psychology Today, doing good for others, no matter how big or small the deed, feels good but also provides reciprocal benefits. The link between volunteering and lower rates of depression has been well-documented, and there is neural evidence from MRI studies suggesting a link between being generous and signs of happiness in the brain.

The following are several ways to improve oneself by being more mindful of others.

- Be aware of social issues. Read THE CLARENDON ENTERPRISE to stay up-to-date on the pulse of your community. Educate yourself about current issues that are affecting people from all walks of life. Understanding the needs or plights of others may boost your willingness to get involved with nonprofit

organizations. It also may make you more empathetic and compassionate toward other people.

- Volunteer at a charity. Find a charitable group with which you can volunteer your time. This is a great way to support a cause you believe in and makes it possible for you to collaborate with others who are like-minded, potentially helping you make new friends.

- Help someone you know. It's commendable to want to assist a charity or a global cause, but what about people close to you who may need a boost? Whether you're lugging boxes to help a friend move or babysitting a niece or nephew so their parents can enjoy a much-needed night out, when you help someone, those good deeds will return to you in time.

When making resolutions, people should consider goals that involve helping others. While this assistance can benefit the people who are on the receiving end of the care and attention, those who are giving of themselves also reap considerable rewards.



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SHOP LOCAL - QUICK SOLUTIONS

Last Minute Gift Ideas

Early bird shoppers may purchase and even wrap gifts before December, but eleventh-hour shoppers may need some help come the holiday season. For those last-minute folks, there still are plenty of ways to ensure your shopping list is checked off. The following gifts are quick to purchase and can still make for thoughtful presents.

Liquor or wine basket: Prepackaged spirits often come with decorative glasses and other accoutrements for entertaining. What's more, they're convenient to purchase if you're on a time crunch.

Gas station gift card: Drivers

will appreciate a gift card to their favorite fueling station. Such cards suit anyone who has a car and frequently travels or commutes.

Food basket: A visit to the supermarket or a convenience center can yield many tasty finds that can be packaged together into a gift basket. Pair foods with a gift card to that retailer.

Premade gifts: Don't overlook your local pharmacy as a place to find convenient gifts. Look for unique items in the seasonal aisle, where you might be able to find stocking-stuffer toiletries or cosmetic gifts that suit several people on your shopping list.



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