

## Shop local

Congratulations! You made it through Thanksgiving dinner and the hoopla over Black Friday, with the crowds and the come-ons. You wove your way through mega parking lots and then hauled bulky packages back to your car.

You deserve a pat on the back, but what you more than likely have are sore feet from tromping through mega stores, and maybe a queasy stomach from eating that second piece of pie after all the guests left on Thanksgiving.

So sit down, put your feet up and plan your next foray into the marketplace. After all, you still have to find that elusive gift for your picky sister and something for your mother-in-law who has everything and knows it. That's not to mention a little something for the classroom teacher, piano teacher, swim coach and your local clergyman. The list goes on.

This time, plan to shop at local Huron Valley businesses. When you do, 68 percent of what you spend is reinvested in the community, according to Small Business Saturday. Patronizing small local businesses helps to keep unemployment and property taxes low and property values high. A number of local businesses have also supported kids and local organizations with their charitable [good works](#). Now you can reward them for that effort with your business.

Small Business Saturday is a new initiative established last year between Black Friday and [Cyber Monday](#). This year, it was held on Nov. 26. But you can shop locally any day of the year, including the remaining days leading up to Christmas.

According to the Small Business Saturday website, there are four reasons to shop at small businesses.

- The taxes local businesses pay help support the local community's infrastructure and services, maintaining a safe and high-quality lifestyle for residents.
- Small businesses employ half of all private sector employees.
- Small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms.
- During every year of the last decade, 60-80 percent of new jobs were generated by small

businesses.

If that isn't reason enough, consider that you're likely to receive more attentive, personal service. Successful small business owners get to know their customers by name and often stock [merchandise](#) according to their customers' preferences. They're also

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more likely to special order items for their customers. In addition, you'll save time and money on gas shopping close to home. Look for a collectible or handmade craft at Fragments or Aubergine Gallery; pick up a pair of [winter boots](#) from For Feet Sake, choose a custom-designed ring from Milford Jewelers, or start a loved one on a new favorite pastime at Village Toy Shoppe. These are among the Huron Valley's unique merchants. If you're already done with your holiday gift buying, plan your holiday menu around Michigan-made products. There are plenty to choose from like Faygo pop, Germack nuts, Just Baked cupcakes and chocolate-covered Traverse City cherries. As luck — and good municipal planning — would have it, there will be no long [walks in](#) the rain to park. With no crowds to fight, you'll likely make it home with plenty of time to hide those gifts — and taste test those food items — before the rest of the family makes an appearance.

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