

WHY SHOP LOCAL?

Because it makes a HUGE difference!

By: Johnny Hanna, VivaTysons Magazine

After my retirement from the food industry, my focus on the plight of the independent businesses in my town intensified. And today, as I look at the season ahead of us, I am reminded of the many ways shopping at our local independent merchant is the gift that can keep on giving. Just consider the simple everyday facts: For every hundred dollars spent in locally-owned independent stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. (If half the employed population spent \$50 each month in locally-owned independent businesses it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.) (www.the350project.net) Independent businesses raise the standard of living in our communities because they take their profits and buy products and services from our other local businesses. (Or, simply put, money spent here usually stays here.) Imagine if we could transition just 10% of our expenditures right here where we live. That dollar amount coming back into our community would be staggering. And how it comes back is the real gift to us and our kids. Consider the increase in jobs and wages, the stronger tax base we can build for our schools and municipalities, and the enriched lives of the merchants and organizations they support. Local business owners invest in the community they serve. Your patronage is everything, and we all know the service levels we enjoy when our satisfaction and their reputation is on the line every day. Green? Shopping locally saves everyone time and money. Shopping locally reduces our gas consumption and pollution. And local stores and merchants can help create and sustain vibrant, walkable communities, reduce sprawl and reduce the need for so many automobiles. How about variety? How many national chains cater to the dietary needs of our Kosher and Muslim consumers. (40% of our country is foreign born, and that creates retail opportunities.) These “one-of-a-kind” operations provide us with distinctive and international character. And, as the pro at the club once told me, the more people shop here, the more products and services will be available. The increasingly homogenized look of many towns around the country has people yearning for the kinds of town(s) we live in today. So, vote with your pocketbook this season. Supporting a local merchant at what appears to be a slightly higher cost may be a bargain-the best deal in town.