

# VIRTUAL HOLIDAY MARKET BRINGS CHRISTMAS SHOPPING HOME

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A Georgetown woman is striving to bring residents together in a pandemic-safe way to shop locally and have some fun this holiday season.

Melanie Ventura is the face behind the Better Together Virtual Holiday Market, an online shopping experience with dozens of local vendors and some virtual family events.

"The holidays this year are going to be very different, so this will be a great way for the community to be together when we can't really be together," said Ventura. "We can support local businesses while having some fun."

The event, running from Nov. 21 to Dec. 6 on Facebook, will include

small businesses selling everything from handmade gifts to books, décor, items for holiday cooking and more.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals will round out the shopping experience.

On the family fun side, children will be able to have a virtual visit with Santa the afternoon of Nov. 28, followed by a magic and illusionist show that evening. Then, it's time to get creative on Nov. 29 with a virtual craft session.

"I picture people gathering around with snacks and a hot chocolate, creating this new tradition while watching the entertainment," said Ventura.

The event will raise funds for Food4Kids Halton, with those who take part in the entertainment being asked to donate to

the charity.

There'll also be prizes, like an iPad with smart cover and shopping spree.

This isn't Ventura's first time organizing such an event.

During the summer, she hosted a virtual back-to-school vendor show to help parents shop for what they need in a pandemic-safe way.

Based on its popularity, the Better Together Virtual Holiday Market was born.

"We (the vendors) have become this community of local businesses who are encouraging each other, supporting each other and sharing each other's businesses with people," she said. "It's become this really great thing that I think a lot of people are going to enjoy."

Some other businesses are participating as spon-



Judith Ochoa Photography

Melanie Ventura, founder of the Better Together Virtual Holiday Market.

sors, including Euro DNA, the Better Life Co., Puzzles Canada, Generation

Physiotherapy, Circle Foundation and One Life Family Chiropractic (Dr.

Matt Bradbury).

For further details visit [bettertogethermarket.ca](http://bettertogethermarket.ca).

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