

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESSES

Locally owned and operated businesses are the social, cultural and economic heart of a community. Unfortunately, this past year has left many unsure if they can continue. In a 5-part online series, we looked at the vital role local businesses play in our communities, the financial pressure they are under due to COVID-19 and what we can do to help them survive.

Locally owned and operated businesses are in trouble.

While it's true that some creative and enterprising entrepreneurs have been able to find a way to succeed under COVID-19, there are many other businesses whose survival is at stake.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is warning that this pandemic could force 75,000 Ontario businesses to shut down. Talk to a local business owner and they will likely tell you about their fear they may have to close their doors for good.

Such a loss would be devastating for towns and cities across the province.

These businesses are the fabric of a community. They provide jobs, products, needed services, and much more.

Local owners are often heavily involved in various volunteer causes and service clubs that improve the overall quality of life in our towns. They run food drives and fund minor sports teams. They organize projects to improve neighbourhood parks or revitalize neighbourhoods.

The storefronts of these businesses make up the character of our neighbourhoods; they define our downtown.

Once gone, we lose much more than just a store.

Last week, we highlighted the important role local-



ly-owned businesses play in communities across Ontario, the pressure they are currently under and what may be gone if these stores can't survive.

Yet they can survive. But it requires help. Each of us has the ability to lend our support to these businesses that played a role in building our community.

What can you do? Here are five options.

1. Shop local. It sounds simple and it is. You no longer need to physically go into a locally-owned store to shop local. Many are now offering online sales with either curbside pickup or delivery. Shopping at a small business has probably never been easier.

2. Support locally-owned businesses on social media. You could share your favourite restaurant's menu on social media. Share a photo of what you purchased at a local shop. Come up with some creative shop-local games to play with friends on social media. And make sure to always tag the business.

3. If you don't need anything right now, but still want to help a local business, buy gift cards.

4. Write a positive online review. A good word about any business can always help attract new customers.

5. Focus on buying directly. Shop at your local farmers' market to buy directly from producers. Many communities even have a virtual farmers' market. Where available, call local restaurants directly to order a meal rather than using a delivery app. The restaurant keeps more money from the purchase that way.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT THEIFP.CA

SNAPSHOT



Mary Siddall photo

A vibrant and almost rainbow-like morning sky hangs over the Georgetown Fairgrounds on International Women's Day (Mar. 8). Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

OUR SPECIAL REPORTS DELVE INTO ISSUES THAT MATTER

#LOVELOCAL IS OUR LATEST SPECIAL SERIES, WRITES KAREN MICELI



KAREN MICELI
Column

It's about trust. Our relationship with our readers is built on transparency, honesty and integrity. As such, we have launched a trust initiative to tell you who we are and how and why we do what we do. This column is part of that project.

News of how the dread-

amed in one article.

We have published these in the past addressing important issues affecting our communities, such as homelessness, hate crimes and human trafficking.

Our modest team of reporters, photographers and editors put a lot of hard work and effort into our special series projects and generally feedback from your readers is positive. Expect to see more special reports on our pages in the future.

If you have an idea for an in-depth series of articles on an impactful topic, I would love to hear about it. Please write to me at my email address below.

Karen Miceli is managing editor of Metroland's community newspapers in Halton. She can be reached at kmiceli@metroland.com. We welcome your questions and value your comments. Email our trust committee at trust@metroland.com.

ABOUT US

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