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## **Support Your Local Shops on Small Business Saturday — They Support the Community**

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Small Business Saturday is this weekend, a time when people in towns across Connecticut shop at locally-owned stores and restaurants to show their support for those hometown businesses.

Special events and sales are planned on many Main Streets and in Darien. It's a boost for the small business owner at the beginning of the holiday shopping season, says the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

— *an announcement from the National Federation of Independent Businesses*

“Small businesses are the backbone of Connecticut’s economy, so we are encouraging everyone to consider shopping at one of your community’s great local businesses when you are shopping for gifts this season,”

said Andy Markowski, NFIB state director in Connecticut. “Money spent locally stays local and makes our communities economically vibrant.”

American Express launched Small Business Saturday after the 2009 recession when many small businesses were struggling. Now in its 10th year, the day has become a national celebration and an opportunity for people to support the small, independent businesses that make their communities strong.

[Last year, shoppers spent a record \\$17.8 billion](#) at independent stores and restaurants on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, according to research by American Express and NFIB, the nation’s leading small business advocacy organization.

“Small Business Saturday is a win for both consumers and small businesses. It is an opportunity for shopkeepers to really shine and earn customer support for the rest of the year, and it affords consumers a chance to celebrate and support small and locally-owned businesses,” Markowski said.

“Not to mention, it is a day that doesn’t necessitate wading through crowds and standing in long lines but rather one in which shoppers can enjoy taking their time, find unique products and often interact with the small business owner directly,” he said.

Here is a list of reasons people may want to spend their hard-earned dollars at a small local business:

- Small businesses hire about half of all workers in every state, and they employ local people like your friends and neighbors.
- The dollars spent at small businesses are then spent by the owner and employees near to where they live, enriching your community.
- [Local business owners often support neighborhood teams and charities with donations.](#)
- You will find unique items for sale, or products particular to your area such as local artisan wares, locally sourced food items, or local sports team insignias on clothing.
- Shoppers get to know the people who make your community work and enjoy the experience. Not only that, you are likely to feel good about supporting local merchants.

“Small business owners take a risk when they launch their enterprise, and they face many odds,” said Markowski. “Economic slumps or government mandates can make it hard to survive.

But these entrepreneurs put in many hours and give it their all. It would be great if we could support them all year long, but it is particularly important this time of year to help keep small shops and restaurants open. The increased economic activity can also result in more jobs for local people.”

Consider visiting your local breakfast nook or grill, hair salon or barber, pet grooming business, gift shop, candy store, and more on Small Business Saturday.