

## Shopping local gets extra sweet this Holiday Season through Explore Aurora

The holiday season is upon us and the shopping frenzy that comes with the season is knocking on our doors as well, and as you look to check items off your list, why not shop local at the same time?

Doing so will not only help local business, but it could pay dividends to you as well through the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Explore Aurora program.

The Chamber and Explore Aurora have launched a new holiday season Shop Local Support Local campaign that could earn you one of two prize packages valued at over \$500 each.

All you need to do is visit [exploreaurora.ca](http://exploreaurora.ca) to register for the contest.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce is giving you even more reasons to Explore Aurora! said the Chamber in a statement. There are two prize packages to be won valued at \$500 each. Each package contains a one-night stay at an Aurora hotel (Microtel Inn & Suites or Holiday Inn Express & Suites); and three \$100 gift cards. Spend each \$100 gift card at the retail, restaurant, play and leisure activity of your choice listed [on the website].

Explore Aurora is designed to be a one-stop information source for businesses and consumers alike, focused on four key areas: shop, dine, play and give-back.

For Sandra Ferri, President of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, giving back starts at home.

We decided we needed to do something now as businesses were coming out of the pandemic, so we created the Shop Local Support Local Holiday Campaign, she says. We also received some funding from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to make it a bit of a richer campaign.

In the weeks ahead, banners will be erected in Aurora's Yonge Street core, as well as in the Bayview and Wellington area, to promote both the campaign and local business. The Explore Aurora website will also offer video spotlights for local businesses including retail and restaurants to spotlight all Aurora has to offer.

The pitch has always been the same: get on Explore Aurora and let us help you through our marketing campaigns, says Ms. Ferri. It is free marketing for the businesses and keeping them front of mind for consumers. We have just over 300 businesses on Explore Aurora right now, and that includes a wide spectrum of everything from landscaping to home improvements, to services, retail, restaurants and leisure activities.

With supply chains becoming an issue over the last few months, Ms. Ferri says these setbacks are likely to be felt by large and small businesses this holiday season.

It is one of the reasons we kicked the campaign off now, she says. I think people will want to get out there early on their shopping and we want to make sure they have the ability to do that locally if at all possible. For the challenge, we're making it very easy for people to participate. We really want to drive people to Explore Aurora and the ballot to enter is right there and easy to fill out. People just need to provide basic details and they are in the draw. You only have to enter once for both draws and hopefully while they're at Explore Aurora, they will take a look and see what we have to offer in Aurora.

Additional spotlights beyond the website will be offered through Explore Aurora's social media channels including @exploreaurora on Facebook and Instagram.

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter