

## Give the gift of Canada ? and community ? this holiday season at Oakridge's Fashions



Give the gift of Canada this holiday season as Oakridge's Fashions launches its annual Giving Shop.

Open now at the popular boutique located in the heart of Aurora's historic downtown, this year's Giving Shop features an array of festive gift ideas, most of which have been sourced from within Canada, representing almost every Province.

‘We really worked hard to source a lot of items that were made in Canada’ and, interestingly, most by small businesses,’ says Deborah Clark, owner of Oakridge's Fashions. ‘There's representation of Canada's small businesses who make everything from small-batch chocolate in Montreal, beautiful syrups from a company in Manitoba, a line of cork earrings made by a young woman in her small business in Alberta, and Salt Spring Kitchen is back again with their jams, spreads and savoury items from Salt Spring Island, BC.’

Additional products include artisanal soaps from Edmonton, AB, organic tea from Newfoundland, and custom-made Canadian-themed coasters.

Close to home, the Giving Shop also features an array of items from York Region businesses, including a line of pickled jalapenos from a Newmarket-based small business, and Jude's Miracle Cloth, a product made by a small-business owner in Georgina.

Proceeds from the Giving Shop will benefit several community organizations: the Canadian Federation of University Women's scholarship programs, Rose of Sharon Services to Young Mothers, CHATS ? Community & Home Assistance to Seniors, the Alzheimer Society of York Region, and emergency care at Southlake Health.

‘The more the Giving Shop makes, the more we send out the door,’ says Clark.

Clark, who is passionate about carrying Canadian products at Oakridge's, began sourcing items for this year's Giving Shop back in August.

It was, she says, a painstaking but rewarding process.

?You're looking for things that are for men, women, and children,? she says, adding she has a lengthy list of criteria she hopes to fill before items end up on their shelves. ?There is no end of wonderful items out there to buy. We did our very best and every year I tend to think that we have done better than the year before and I think this is true because we are getting better and better at this. It's a process, but I think there are some really wonderful things.?

While there is an array of new products in the Giving Shop this year, there are some returning favourites at the heart of it all. Popular jams and jellies will once again be featured, along with stocking stuffer gadgets, Frasier Fir-scented candles, and faux-suede stretchable gloves.

Also returning this year is the latest installment of the Mischief Mice, a series of children's books penned by Clark, and inspired by the Canadian-sourced felted mice which decorate the Christmas Tree at the centre of the store, which are also for sale.

This year's story, A Wish and a Twirl, follows one of the original mice, Giselle, as she pursues her dream of becoming a ballerina in the Nutcracker, with some help from her mouse friends.

?I think this has become one of my favourite things to do,? says Clark of penning the stories.

?Whether it's scouring the halls for vendors (at gift shows) that have Canadian products, or whether it's figuring out what this year's book will be, I just feel so alive when we can be doing something that is going to help others. It's just everything to me and it is central to who I am, so it makes me excited.?

Oakridge's Fashions is located at 15195 Yonge Street, just south of Wellington. For more information, visit [oakridgefashions.com](http://oakridgefashions.com).

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter