

Shop locally with community focused businesses

By Tom McGee – As published in the Naperville Sun – June 19, 2009

In these tough economic times, consumers should be encouraged to not only spend their dollars locally, but also to specifically support local businesses that are involved and invested in the community. Many local businesses give back to our community in so many ways through their time, financial support and in-kind contributions. Because of their generosity and involvement, Naperville prospers and is a better place to live.

The business community in Naperville has been thriving for more than 175 years, since the first trading post established by Joseph Naper just west of the downtown area. Despite some of the big chains that have recently arrived on the scene, the strength of Naperville's business community continues to be its independently-owned businesses. At the heart of Naperville, and other communities like Naperville, are the people who invest in their towns to help maintain the quality of life we enjoy. One great example of a business that consistently gives back to the local community is Anderson's Bookshops.

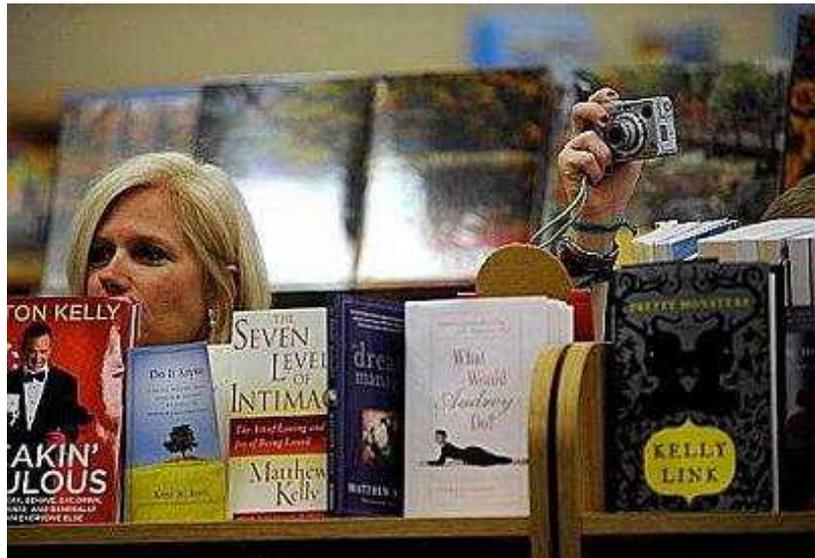


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Becky Anderson Wilkins, co-owner of Anderson's, notes the economic impact of purchasing products from independently owned retailers.

"When you spend \$100 at a local independent retailer, \$68 of that stays in your community. Spend that same \$100 at a national chain and the community only sees \$43," she said.

For the Anderson family, roots run deep in Naperville. In 1964, Harold Kester opened a small paperback bookstore on the second floor above Oswald's Pharmacy, calling it Paperback Paradise. Kester sold the pharmacy and the bookshop to his son-in-law, Robert Anderson, in 1977. Today, the Anderson children, Becky, Tres, Bill and Pete, own Anderson's Bookshops (including an additional location in Downers Grove), Oswald's Pharmacy and Anderson's Bookfair Company.



Anderson's Bookshop in Naperville is known for its celebrity book signings, like Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s visit in October 2008. Sun file

Through the years, the Anderson family has been involved in the community in many ways. Naperville Reads is a prime example. The program is the result of a partnership between Anderson's Bookshop, the Naperville Public Library, Naperville School District 203 and Indian Prairie School District 204. Initiated in 2001, the program seeks to promote the pleasures of reading as a family and community activity. Other community activities include author events, of which several hundred are hosted in their stores, the community and in schools throughout each year. They also host their annual Book Angel program, where children and adults enjoy selecting a keepsake book for an area child in need. They started Andrea's Angels, a program that collects gently used books for redistribution to children, schools and organizations that need the gift of reading.

The Anderson family members get personally involved in our community in other ways as well. Becky Anderson Wilkins is a member of the Sunrise Rotary Club, a board member of the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, KidsMatter and a commissioner on the Advisory Cultural Commission for the city of Naperville. Bill Anderson has been actively involved in the Rotary Club and has served as president. The Andersons are longtime members of the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Naperville Alliance, where Bill is a past president and Becky was on the board. The family members give generously of their time and talents to help local charities.

Remember that when you shop, you do have choices. Select businesses that show they care and know how to give back to the community. Thank the business owner for their involvement and tell them that one of the reasons you are shopping there is because of their investment in the community. Shop locally with community focused businesses and you can help to create a strong, vibrant local economy in these challenging economic times.

Tom McGee is the managing director of Harris Private Bank in Naperville. Harris Bank demonstrates its commitment to the community through our lending activities, our financial contributions and our involvement in community organizations. Contact Tom at tom.mcgee@harrisbank.com or 630-420-3580.