

Cyber Monday: Shop online, help support causes and institutions near and far

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An earlier version of this story misstated the name of a book available at the Philadelphia Museum of Art's website. The book by Liz Yohlin-Bell is called "Armor & Animals."

Does Jeff Bezos need your money?

Amazon is one of the few businesses that is booming in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. According to [Business Insider](#), Amazon is valued at \$1.7 trillion and its owner's net worth is somewhere north of \$200 billion, according to Forbes and Bloomberg.

As you plan your pandemic-induced (or just convenience-seeking) cyber shopping, perhaps you might want to throw some of your hard-earned cash toward someone or something that needs it more than the usual online giants.

Here are some suggestions for online shopping, just in time for Cyber Monday or any time thereafter, that will help a cause — arts institutions, wildlife programs, nonprofits.

These purchases can help keep communities vibrant, while offering a meaningful gift to a special person on your holiday list:

What's it to zoo?

The Cape May County Park and Zoo is located on 85 wooded acres not far from the historic Jersey Shore resort. The zoo is home to more than 250 species, and during the warm summer months, its lush flora provides cool cover to meandering trails. The zoo, which is actually a county park, is open year-round (closing only on Christmas Day) and admission is free.

The zoo, though, has missed out on many of the donations it depends upon to care for its animals, as it's had to limit visitors during the pandemic and was closed for a period of time in the spring.

Animal lovers — and the people who love them — can "adopt" some of the zoo's residents: Beau the Giraffe, Gracie the Zebra, Cody the Bear, Lex the Lion, Luna the Red Panda or Mork the Otter for \$40. That donation gets the recipient a certificate, fact sheet and photo of the animal you've chosen. For an additional \$20 donation, the zoo will send you a stuffed animal representing the one you adopted.

Go: capemaycountynj.gov/1008/Park-Zoo Click the "Adopt an animal" button.

— *Phaedra Trethan*

The play's the thing

The cancellation of the 2020-2021 season has brought financial hardship to the oldest continually producing community theater in New York (and one of the oldest in the country), as well as performing arts venues everywhere.

The mission of Players of Utica is "to give area residents an opportunity to enjoy, study and actively participate in live amateur theater and to stimulate interest in the dramatic arts."

More: Some NY arts institutions have seen 40% decreases in income. What they're doing to survive.

Want to support the cause? Buy the live theater lover in your life a subscription to Players Theatre at Home, a streaming service for original content, for \$5.99 a month. Or you can sponsor a seat in the group's mainstage theater construction project for \$75, which lets you have a brass nameplate put on the arm of a chair.

Go: playersofutica.org/ and click the "Support" tab.

— *Amy Neff Roth*

Art of the matter

The Philadelphia Museum is a treasured institution in the city and region, drawing visitors worldwide to its vast collections. But the impact of the pandemic has been devastating: In August the museum was forced to lay off dozens of employees and is once again closing to visitors as COVID-19 cases surge in Philadelphia and beyond.

The museum, hoping for some revenue even as it's closed, has revamped its online shop and is offering \$20 off any purchase over \$100 and free domestic shipping for Cyber Monday shoppers.

Among its hundreds of art-inspired offerings — jewelry, books, clothing, accessories, stationery and art kits and supplies — are face masks in the style of Vincent Van Gogh's Sunflowers, in adult and children's sizes, created by Ana Thorne.

The museum also has a new children's book, "Armor & Animals," by Liz Yohlin-Bell, a museum educator. The picture book is geared toward ages 4 to 8 and compares objects from the museum's armor collection to the scales, spikes and shells animals have to protect them from predators.

Go: store.philamuseum.org/

— *Phaedra Trethan*

Poems and predators

Nature or wildlife lovers in your life might like to have donations made in their names to The Owl Moon Raptor Center in Boyds, Maryland. The state and federally licensed nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation center has a mission to rescue and rehabilitate injured, sick and orphaned birds of prey and return them to the wild in sound, athletic condition, and to educate the public about raptors.

People who donate \$25 or more will receive a calendar, and those who donate \$30 or more will receive a calendar or a copy of “Prey Tell: An Anthology of Poems about Birds of Prey,” while supplies last.

The center's director Suzanne Shoemaker is a licensed Master Wildlife Rehabilitator, a licensed falconer, and president of the Maryland Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. She became involved in educating the public about raptors through the Maryland home learning community. An expert in animal behavior, ecology and adaptations to natural environments, she became concerned about environmental deterioration and spearheaded volunteer activities to preserve wildlife. Those efforts led to teaching environmental education classes to youth and families.

Melanie Draper of Hagerstown, Maryland, was inspired to donate to Owl Moon when she went to the center and witnessed a bird release firsthand. “They released one raptor. They also had lots of different kinds of birds that you could see up close with their handlers,” she said.

Draper learned about Owl Moon through a co-worker who volunteers at the center. “Seeing all of the different birds and learning about all that they do was very impressive,” she said.

Go: Owl Moon Raptor Center: owlmoon.org/ Click on the "Donate" tab.

— *Alicia Notarianni*

A drink among friends

Can't host Friendsgiving or gather with your friends?

Leave some Friends Giving “potluck-style IPA” on their doorstep.

Friends Giving is a dry-hopped IPA (7% ABV IPA) brewed with Idaho 7, Idaho 7 Cryo, Sabro, Amarillo, Simcoe, Cashmere and Citra hops to produce “a smooth and easy-

drinking IPA featuring a soft, straw haze and a fluffy white head with notes of peach, apricot and tangerine.”

More: [NJ beer: These 14 craft breweries are opening or expanding during COVID-19](#)

It is the result of a collaborative craft brewing project, first conceived at Double Nickel Brewing Co., in Pennsauken, New Jersey, which since 2019 has raised more than \$200,000 in the fight against hunger.

“Friends Giving is our way of turning a little creativity, camaraderie, community and collaboration into support for families struggling to put food on the table,” says John Dalsey, marketing director at Double Nickel.

Participating breweries include founding partners Double Nickel, Cape May Brewing Company (Cape May, New Jersey), Tonewood Brewing Company (Oaklyn, New Jersey), and Urban Village Brewing Company (Philadelphia), joined this year by Source Farmhouse Brewery (Colts Neck, New Jersey), Solace Brewing Company (Sterling, Virginia), Ocelot Brewing Company (Dulles, Virginia), Old Ox Brewery (Ashburn, Virginia) and Crooked Run Brewing (Sterling, Virginia).

The 2020 Friends Giving IPA is brewed under the auspices of Double Nickel’s nonprofit arm CollaborAid, founded to fight food insecurity in the region.

Materials needed to make the beer (malt, hops, labeling and aluminum cans) were donated by suppliers, and Dietz & Watson is also a major contributor to the project.

Sales of Friends Giving benefit Cathedral Kitchen of Camden, New Jersey; Philabundance of Philadelphia, Virtua Health’s Mobile Farmers Market in South Jersey, Community FoodBank of New Jersey, and Loudoun Hunger Relief in Leesburg, Virginia.

Friends Giving has limited distribution available throughout New Jersey, the Philadelphia area, Chicago, California, Oregon, North Carolina, Florida and New York, with the Virginia-based Friends Giving seeing distribution throughout Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Go: dncbeer.com/community-donations

— *Tammy Paolino*

Behind the bars

Whether you have a fascination for Al Capone, a deep interest Philadelphia history, or a desire to learn more about the country's incarceration rates, there is something worth exploring behind the walls of Eastern State Penitentiary.

Like all of the city's museums, Eastern State, once the most famous prison in the world, is temporarily closed due to COVID restrictions.

But you can support the historic site — and learn about its mission to "interpret the legacy of American criminal justice reform, from the nation's founding through to the present day."

In addition to buying a membership, you also can play Santa with some cool gifts including books, hoodies, shot glasses, key chains, plush toys and of course, T-shirts bearing the likeness of its most famous resident, Mr. Capone.

Go: eastern-state-penitentiary-museum-store.myshopify.com

— *Tammy Paolino*

Dickens at home

Nothing speaks to the holiday spirit quite like the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge.

McCarter Theatre's version of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is a holiday tradition in historic Princeton, New Jersey.

Now you can unwrap a theatrical performance of the holiday classic to enjoy from the comfort of your living room. For \$40, McCarter Theatre offers A Christmas Carol @Home, starring you, your family and your friends.

The beautifully packaged box contains everything you need to create a theater experience in your home. It includes individually wrapped envelopes with scenes that you can perform together or virtually; character-sketch postcards to color, frame or send, and information cards to seed a conversation and discussion about Dickens. Recipients also will gain access to the theater's full production script, and more.

Orders must be placed by Dec. 7 to ensure delivery by Dec. 24.

Go: mccarter.org/tickets-events/ACCatHOME

— *David P. Willis*

Back to nature

During the summer lockdown, there were no malls, bowling alleys, movie theaters or vacations. Instead, our only recreational option was one conveniently outside our front doors: nature, as we flocked to nearby parks, lakes and woodlands and saw their many creatures in action.

This Cyber Monday, you can give back to the Garden State's natural habitats and wildlife by making a tribute gift in honor of a recipient to New Jersey Audubon. Based in Bernardsville, the group protects New Jersey's animals and plants — especially endangered and threatened species — and promotes preservation of local natural habitats.

An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the person or family of the individual recognized.

Go: njudubon.org/ways-to-give

— Jenna Intersimone

Throw a little shade

Want to ensure that those forests you hiked through this summer are still around, even when COVID isn't?

Give a gift tree from the Arbor Day Foundation, which is the largest nonprofit membership organization dedicated to tree planting.

Starting at \$5 per tree, you can purchase evergreen seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation in varieties that vary based on what United States region you or your recipient plan to grow them in.

For instance, in New Jersey, choose from the Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce or White Pine.

The Arbor Day Foundation website also includes apparel, holiday cards, coffee and other gift options.

Go: shop.arborday.org/gift-trees to place your tree order.

— Jenna Intersimone

'Tis the season to mask up

Spectrum Designs Foundation is a nonprofit social enterprise that provides meaningful work opportunities to individuals on the autism spectrum.

It's an offshoot of the Long Island-based Nicholas Center. Spectrum Designs and Nicholas Center are non-profit organizations founded by Stella Spanakos, Nicole Sugrue and Patrick Bardsley. Two of the co-Founders have children on the Autism Spectrum.

Spectrum Designs offers screen printed T-shirts, corporate gifts and baked goods, with proceeds of each sale going back into the organization and its programs, including its

newly opened site in Pleasantville, New York.

Spectrum is also offering a fashionable — and vital — bit of apparel: face masks. The washable masks are made from combed and ring-spun cotton and polyester and feature fabric earloops. One size fits most, (Masks are not FDA-approved or intended for medical use.)

Go: spectrumdesigns.org/

— *Karen Croke*

'Coping with Covid'

Children in the expressive arts program at Dutchess County, New York's Astor Services for Children & Families create colorful works of art including prints with the theme "Coping with Covid," starting at \$25.

"Abstract does not exist in the physical plain, but in your thoughts and dreams. Kids have taken those thoughts and dreams and spilled them onto the canvas," according to the promotion for one print.

The agency provides behavioral and educational services for thousands of children and their families, and the purchase price of each print goes toward programming.

The community-based nonprofit organization also provides children's mental health services, child welfare services, and early childhood development services. Astor serves children and families in New York State's Mid-Hudson Valley region and the Bronx.

Go: astorservices.org/products-page/

— *Karen Croke*

Stay safe, support the arts

The Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, an arts and education landmark at the Jersey Shore, was left in "dire straits" by the pandemic, according to its president and CEO, Adam Philipson.

While the Basie started hosting socially distanced, indoor shows in its new nightclub space The Vogel in October, it could still use support.

Patrons can help by shopping at the Basie's online merchandise store, featuring face masks (\$10) bearing slogans such as "I Wear This Mask Because I Love Theatre," "I Wear This Mask Because I Love The Arts," "I Wear This Mask Because I Love Concerts" and "I Wear This Mask Because I Love The Basie."

Proceeds from the sale of Basie merchandise support the venue.

Go: Visit thebasie.org.

— *Alex Biese*

For the ‘ultimutt’ dog lover

Philly-based skincare and beauty company Franklin and Whitman has quite a following within the wellness community due to its vegan and cruelty-free hair products, skincare and men’s grooming line.

The company, founded by local entrepreneur and internet techie Christopher Cieri in 2016, also has made its own paw print by helping out man’s best friend.

For every online or wholesale purchase, Franklin and Whitman donates 5% of the proceeds to dog rescue organizations such as the Main Line Animal Rescue in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania SPCA in Danville, Lancaster and Philly.

Every month, the organization teams up with the PSPCA to feature a dog of the month on their website and social media channels. Whoever decides to adopt the lucky pooch doesn’t pay an adoption fee.

With stocking stuffers starting at \$7.95 and beauty kits ranging from \$59.95 to \$199.95, there’s something for everyone on your list. That includes Fido, who might dig Franklin and Whitman's popular Segar Park Dog Balm (\$19.95).

Go: franklinandwhitman.com

— *Micaela Hood*

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