

Local Businesses Grow Together Thanks To Illinois Local

by Gemma Long
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JACKSONVILLE - Illinois Local launched on December 9, 2020, amid the global pandemic. Gemma and Chris Long identified a need in Illinois communities for local independent businesses to connect, learn, and grow together.

Illinois Local has expanded to 175 members in just 15 months. Members are in Springfield, Carlinville, Edwardsville, Champaign, Hanna City, and Jacksonville, to name a few. The membership consists of photographers, florists, artists, insurers, realtors, restaurateurs, retailers, designers, and more.

As well as being included in a search engine optimized directory, members participate in pop-up events, markets, socials, professional photoshoots, social media takeovers, an annual conference, and awards. But one of the most powerful attributes of this membership is the opportunity for collaboration and growth between these local independent businesses.



“Members collaborate to offer new services or products, open businesses together, wholesale from one another, and host member events. It is a remarkable membership, and we are proud of everyone involved,” said Gemma, 38.

Erin Saxton-Snodgrass, 41, is the founder and owner of The Painted Tin Bin and joined Illinois Local at the end of the last year in the run-up to its annual Holiday Market on Small Business Saturday.

“Illinois Local has benefited my business in many ways; allowed me to showcase products, helped elevate my social media, brought customers to DIY classes, provided collaboration with other members, and created educational opportunities as a small business owner that will help me work smarter,” said Erin.

Jessica Lynn, 32, is a macramé artist, the owner of Green Haven Co. in Jacksonville, and is launching a new boutique alongside two other Illinois Local members in Springfield this summer.

“I recommend Illinois local to all my fellow makers and small business friends. It has allowed me to collaborate on my macramé and consign through my brick-and-mortar, Green Haven Co,” said Jess, also of One Knotty Maker.

“I also look forward to seeing new vendors and makers that are part of Illinois local to be in Wildly Rooted Boutique.”

Callie Estes owns JoJo Jewelry and is launching Wildly Rooted Boutique alongside Jess and Courtney Kirkham, owners of Cloth & Oak. Velvet and Rosemary owners Angela Holland and Aubrey Johnson. Velvet and Rosemary offers new, preloved and vintage items. Erin Saxton-Snodgrass, owner of The Painted Bin, offers DIY painting classes.

Callie Estes, 22, owns JoJo Jewelry and is launching Wildly Rooted Boutique alongside Jess and Courtney Kirkham, 29, owner of Cloth & Oak. She joined Illinois Local to meet new people and local businesses.

“It has allowed me to reach a larger network of people and have the opportunity to get my earrings into the hands of new people and into new shops,” said Callie.

“I collaborate with several different Illinois Local members. I collaborate on my earrings with Jess and am in several shops of those who are in Illinois local.”

“I would encourage fellow local independent business owners to join Illinois Local to help them gain networking. They may even be able to gain some business friends along the way like I have,” said Callie.

There is a diverse range of members, some well-established, such as Troxell, Robert’s Seafood Market, and Staff Carpet, and others that are new. Velvet and Rosemary launched in March at fellow Illinois Local member Peace, Love, and Sweat in Springfield. You can purchase high-fashion items - new, preloved, and vintage - from Velvet and Rosemary owners Angela Holland and Aubrey Johnson on Instagram and at pop-ups. Angela also owns Broad Strokes Home Design, a member of Illinois Local.

“Illinois Local allows us to participate in pop-up events throughout the community. Small business owners are stronger together. It is a great way to find your people and put yourself out there.”

For more information about Illinois Local, visit illinoislocal.org, the Facebook page, or @illinois_local on Instagram.

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