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**\*\*\*EDS: Interviews with Participating Small Business Owners & Photos Available. Downtown Women's Center Features Products Made by Women Transitioning from Homelessness\*\*\***

## **MAYOR GARCETTI URGES ANGELENOS TO SHOP LOCAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

*The "Do Something Big, Support Small" initiative boosts small businesses during the critical holiday season*

To find creative makers and artists making original products in Los Angeles, visit [www.LAOriginal.com](http://www.LAOriginal.com)

LOS ANGELES -- Mayor Eric Garcetti has a simple message to holiday shoppers this year: "Do something big. Support local small businesses online and safely in your neighborhood this holiday season."

Today, to help small businesses and protect people's livelihoods, Mayor Garcetti, in partnership with L.A. Original, a program of the Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles, announced the "Do Something Big, Support Small" initiative, which encourages Angelenos to do their holiday shopping with small, local businesses.

"Our small businesses are the beating heart of our economy, and they all need our support throughout this pandemic," said Mayor Garcetti. "As the coronavirus surges again, this is a critical moment for Angelenos to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities — and that includes shopping local. When we spend locally, that's an investment in our neighborhoods — we can do something big for L.A. by shopping small for our holiday gifts."

Los Angeles' small businesses have been especially hard-hit by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For many small businesses, the holidays are a make-it-or-break-it period for their bottom lines, accounting for 20% to 40% of annual sales, according to the National Retail Federation. How our small businesses weather the pandemic is critical to the region's overall economic health, with a recent study by SmartAsset finding that 29% of Los Angeles County residents receive income from small businesses. Small businesses are also the largest source of jobs in Los Angeles County.

"The Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles launched L.A. Original to promote local makers, manufacturers and small businesses that add to our city's diversity, dynamism and economic strength," said Deidre Lind, CEO at the Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles. "These businesses chose to invest in our city and create jobs here. Now, it's our turn to support them."

Focused on giving back to Los Angeles, L.A. Original has given \$50,000 in grant funding to Downtown Women's Center (DWC), to support 3,500 hours of creative and retail job training to women transitioning out of homelessness. The Center sells products made by formerly homeless women employed by DWC's job skills and mentorship program, Made by DWC.

"Unlike most small businesses, we are a social enterprise that provides job training and employment opportunities for women transitioning out of homelessness," said Joe Altepeter, Downtown Women's Center's Chief of Social Enterprise. "MADE by DWC chose to close our

two stores and pivot our resources to increase our eCommerce presence. We started selling our women's apparel through IG Stories and we added a Resale page to our Home & Gift ecommerce site. Like all small businesses, we took some major hits, but we are grateful for the community support. We kept everyone on payroll and continued with our job training program understanding that women, and women of color especially, will be hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic. We are grateful for the resilience of the community we serve.”

The “Do Something Big, Support Small” initiative features a digital and social media marketing campaign and a bus shelter and digital billboard campaign with pro bono media placement from JCDecaux and ClearChannel Outdoor. The campaign’s marketing materials and design were created pro bono by L.A. based advertising agency Giant Spoon, with video production by Passerine.US.

Participating L.A. Original small businesses represent neighborhoods from across the city, and the rich diversity of Los Angeles.

“L.A. Original has placed a spotlight on the many talented creative minds and makers the city has to offer. As an incubator, it has opened new opportunities for our business to grow and continue manufacturing locally in Los Angeles. L.A.’s rapid response to developing PPE and essential goods in the beginning of the pandemic proved how important our local manufacturing small businesses are to our community,” said Rodolfo Ramirez, Co-Founder and Creative Director of Pocket Square Clothing, DTLA.

“I started off as a key holder in the L.A. Original store and, now, I’m an L.A. Original maker. L.A. Original has given me a platform that allows me to take my business to levels I could never reach alone. I am grateful for L.A. Original. Being a creator in Los Angeles keeps my spirit lifted,” said Jhamana Creer, Founder of Keep It Vertical, Slauson/West L.A.

Kristen Pomphrey, Founder and Creative Director of P.F. Candle Co. in Echo Park said, “Overall, we’ve really had customers show up for us -- during stay at home, we saw them turning to fragrance to improve their home space, but also, to support an independently-owned business that needed them.”

“I’m not going to sugarcoat it, staying in business has been a real struggle. We have made some hard decisions, even if it nearly broke our hearts, like downsizing our team, reducing our retail footprint, and trying to do more with less. We are grateful for the amazing outpouring of support from our loyal customers. We’re the lucky ones at least surviving; my heart goes out to the businesses who’ve had to close permanently, and especially to those people who’ve lost loved ones,” said Angie Myung, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer of Poketo, DTLA and Little Tokyo.

“When farmers markets and festivals started to close at the start of the Pandemic, we were terrified and didn’t know how we were going to stay open,” said Krystyl Wright, Founder of Lot XI, West Adams.

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## **ABOUT THE MAYOR'S FUND FOR LOS ANGELES**

The Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to improving life for all Angelenos. Bringing together institutions and experts from across the City, the Fund supports programs to create transformative change across Los Angeles, making it a world leader in economic prosperity, government efficiency, community resiliency, and quality of life for all of its residents. Uniquely positioned at the crossroads of local government, business, philanthropy, and non-profits, the Fund sparks communication and collaboration to tackle some of Los Angeles' most complex challenges. The Fund is supported by private donations and is overseen by an independent Board of Directors.

[www.mayorsfundla.org](http://www.mayorsfundla.org).