National Local Marketing Franchise assists Local Businesses amidst Pandemic

CW44 | Tampa Bay – Whether you're a parent trying to facilitate virtual classes, a business trying to stay afloat, a community resident just trying to go about your life as "normal" as possible – you've probably had to adjust your everyday life in some way as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Michael Plummer Jr., the President/CEO of the national Our Town America franchise that connects local businesses with new movers each month, knows just how important it is to stick together as a community during these tough times.

"We have businesses who have been with us for decades and they're having to close their doors. It's a struggle out there for every type of business," says Plummer. "And, unfortunately, some won't survive. It's not like people are going out exploring the community like they used to. They're going out of their house with a destination in mind," he says.

Clark Gamble, Owner of Carriage Cleaners in Seminole, FL (19-year Our Town America Sponsor)

Since the pandemic has hit communities around the nation so harshly, Plummer is taking a more aggressive approach to help the business owners he's come to know so well over the years.

In conjunction with all Our Town franchise owners nationwide, Plummer is taking part in the 'Save Our Town' movement urging people to help revive local small businesses.

Examples of hard-hit businesses in the Tampa Bay area include a 22-year Our Town Sponsor Business, PoFolks Restaurant, and Carriage Cleaners in Seminole – who has been partnered with Our Town for 19 years. "People just aren't dressing out and going out to eat as often as they used to," says Plummer. "Dry cleaning is just one of those industries you might not think about being hit". But numbers show that they could use more foot traffic.

According to Yelp's local economic impact report, as of mid-June, nearly 140,000 businesses closed nationwide as of March 1. Of all retail business closures, 41% of them were permanent.

The *'Save Our Town'* movement led by Plummer and his franchisees urges people to find creative ways to help the businesses in their communities stay open. Watch

the CW44 interview below for ways to help.

- Buy a gift card or start a tab! Buy gift cards you can use later, or pay $100 upfront for future purchases & ask them to withdraw from your tab when you visit.
- Holiday shop now! Some local shops may not make it to the holiday rush. Buy your gifts now & give them a boost!
- Tip well many servers, baristas, & delivery people have been out of work at some point this year. If you can afford it, leave a big tip & make someone's day!
- Schedule and pay for future services. Some salons & massage parlors will allow you to pay for services in advance. You can pay for haircuts now & have the salon withdraw from your account as you go.
- Leave a positive review online. Many people are looking for safe places to eat & shop. Leave a positive review of your favorite restaurants & local shops to tell your community how they're keeping customers safe & healthy during the pandemic. Mentioning outdoor seating is a plus.
- Redeem your New Mover Offers. If you're a new mover who recently received your Our Town America Welcome Package, be sure to redeem your local business Gift Certificates. The businesses included in Our Town America Welcome Packages reach out to new movers each month as they want to welcome residents, like yourself, to your new neighborhood! Return the favor by patronizing these businesses – whether in-store, curbside or delivery.

Remember: For every dollar spent at a small business, approximately 67 cents stays in the local community. Shopping local when possible is what's best for local economies nationwide.

The Our Town America franchise system wants consumers and business owners nationwide to know that we're here to support you during this time by offering various methods to relay business offerings to locals. Both local business owners and consumers will benefit from banding together to strengthen local economies.

Our Town America supports small businesses across the nation 365 days per year.

If you're a local business looking for a way to reach out to new or current customers, reach out to Our Town America at 1-800-497-8360 to get connected with your local representative.