



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact: Audrey Schwartzberg (518) 891-6200, [aschwartzberg@adirondack.org](mailto:aschwartzberg@adirondack.org)**

### **A growing market for products with a story**

*Wholesale show connects regional artisans and shops*

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY — Today’s shoppers, and Millennials in particular, are looking for products and experiences with a story.

According to a [2016 study](#) by The Wild Center on the habits and preferences of Millennials, this generation of 20- and 30-somethings is setting a trend where “unique and authentic” experiences steeped in local culture are key. Millennials’ influence on travel, shopping and employment has the potential to bolster creative enterprises and small businesses in the Adirondack region and beyond.

Adirondack Buyer Days, an annual wholesale gift show hosted by the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), provides a marketplace for regional artisans and retailers to connect with the shared goal of expanding their markets and enhancing the customer experience. The event, which is free and open to store owners and retail buyers, will take place at the Saratoga Springs City Center on April 23-24, 2018.

“Adirondack Buyer Days has a long history of supporting small businesses throughout the region,” said ANCA Artisan Program Coordinator Lauren Richard, who has organized the juried trade show for the last three years of its 32-year history. “This show is all about building connections between neighbors and enhancing communities. Both retailers and artisans benefit when customers feel connected to the people who make the products on store shelves.”

Due to the increased demand for locally made products and a growing number of strong vendor applications, Richard has expanded the size of the exhibition from 88 booths last year to 102 booths in 2018. Regional artisans will display handmade rustic and contemporary gifts, which are curated exclusively for retailers. Products include housewares, furniture, fine art, jewelry, printed materials, bath products and specialty foods.

Richard attributes the show’s expansion to the shift in people’s preferences from mass produced products to locally made products “with a face or a story behind them.” This shift is happening here in

the North Country and nationwide as shoppers, including Millennials, spend more of their dollars on local products and establishments.

Josh Pratt, Retail Manager and Buyer for the Wild Supply Co. store at The Wild Center feels that the Buyer Days show is a worthwhile event for both retailers and artisans. "It's great opportunity to find good regional products from established wholesalers and new artisans who have a wholesale platform," he said from behind a sales counter where several Buyer Days vendors' products are displayed.

"It's a really nice cross section of stuff," he said. "I go to a lot of other gift shows, and Buyer Days has a lot broader offerings in terms of different products."

In order to maintain a high level of quality and a diversity of goods at the show, artisans go through a vendor application process, said Richard. This process also ensures that all products at the show are produced within the "North Country" region which includes northern New York and northern New England.

"We are so grateful to ANCA for offering this opportunity to local businesses," said Nance Arquiett, co-owner of 2 Mama Birds, a handmade jewelry company in Massena, NY. Arquiett and her business partner Brittany Murtagh, have been attending Adirondack Buyer Days shows since 2015. Because the event welcomes vendors with varying levels of wholesaling experience, they have been able to gradually improve their marketing, production and sales over the years. Their birdsnest necklaces and earrings are among the Buyer Days products displayed in The Wild Center's store.

"These relationships are priceless," said Arquiett. "The support and exposure we've had at Buyer Days has been integral to building up our business and connecting with other makers and buyers."

These relationships, Richards argues, create a foundation for sharing makers' stories in an engaging way and shaping an authentic customer experience.

Buyers are able to place wholesale orders directly with vendors at the event. Cash and carry purchasing will also be possible with many exhibitors. Retail buyer registration is free:

[www.adironack.org/adirondack-buyer-days](http://www.adironack.org/adirondack-buyer-days).

For more information about Adirondack Buyer Days or to become an event sponsor, contact ANCA's Artisan Program Coordinator Lauren Richard at [lrichard@adirondack.org](mailto:lrichard@adirondack.org) or (518) 891-6200.

[ANCA](#) is an independent nonprofit organization growing the New Economy in northern New York. Using an integrated approach to sustainable economic development and prosperity where economic health, community vitality and ecological stewardship are equally important outcomes, ANCA focuses on creating opportunity for people with diverse backgrounds, experience and education levels.

**Two (2) photos attached:**

**Photo 1:** Buyers from Green Goddess Natural Market of Lake Placid, NY sample products made by Lizzie Boolukos, owner of Seven Flowers of Luxury in Plattsburgh, NY, at the 2017 Adirondack Buyer Days in Saratoga Springs, NY.

**Photo 2:** Adam Cresko of Roosevelt Grooming Co. in Cohoes, NY speaks with Audra Herman, a buyer representing New York Makers, at the 2017 Adirondack Buyer Days.

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