**Stores unite for holiday sale**

Downtown hosts open houses to mark beginning of the Christmas season

David Hartnett

The holiday season is approaching and Downtown Kirksville merchants were out this past weekend promoting their shops. A collection of 17 merchants in the downtown area opened their doors to the public on Saturday to host an open house to preview their products and encourage shoppers to jump on holiday shopping. The event was appropriately scheduled to coincide with the annual downtown Kirksville Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

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Sometimes these victims are only children who are being sexually abused by someone in their immediate circle of family and friends, Krylowicz said. As many children already have begun to do their own dreaming and planning for this holiday season, she said it was fitting that the merchants would also show the variety of products each one offers.

"I think it's important to have a lot of people come in and just shop around on their own as well as being able to talk to people and really make sure they have a good opportunity to try to make more different," Wynn said.

It's also an opportunity for a downtown resident like Liz Skiko, the owner of the Edna Blanchard house, to try to make each store different. We're trying to give the local people a really lucky to have our downtown," Skiko said.

One of the reasons we picked this week-end was the prediction of good weather, Caldwell said. "It's not just to get the regulars, but for everybody so they could come to downtown and enjoy themselves, as well as the merchants wanted to take advantage of this.

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