



Press Release (Distribute: December 16)

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Apparel, Home Décor and Gift Shop in Virginia Receives National Small Business Award
2015 Indie Award Winner Donates Prize to Charity with "Take Less. Give More." Approach

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – In a season when giving is top of mind, 2015 Indie Award recipient, [A. Dodson's](#), with locations in Suffolk, Norfolk and Virginia Beach, Va., donated its prize money and more. Daily, the staff at the independently-owned shops provide customers with personal shoppers to help fill their clothing, décor and gifting needs. They also make philanthropy an integral part of their sales model to make an impact in the community. Annually, the national small business movement [Independent We Stand](#) recognizes the top small business in the country, through the Indie Award.

"The excitement and community support across the country was unmatched once again during this year's nomination and voting phases," said Bill Brunelle, co-founder of Independent We Stand. "A. Dodson's rose to the top with a mission to serve their customers and their community by providing a way for shoppers to pay-it-forward with each purchase through their "Round Up" program. The program allows customers to round up their totals at checkout for charity, the company then matches the donation. They also let their customers vote monthly on what organization benefits from the round up."

Owner Alison Dodson Anderson took her giving approach a step further by promoting A. Dodson's Indie Award nomination on Facebook and promising a donation of the cash prize winnings to the charity of her customers' choice. After the vote tally, [H.E.R. Shelter](#) was the clear winner. The private, non-profit shelter provides resources to women and children dealing with domestic violence and homelessness.

A. Dodson's is also a mentor and supporter of other small businesses and prides itself on drawing attention to some of its favorites through a "Small Business Spotlight" on its Facebook page and website. As an extension of that, A. Dodson's is donating even more of its Indie Award winnings to another top ten finalist, Coco's Cottage, giving the specialty women's clothing store the "Small Business Web Starter Package."

"Giving back to the community is phenomenal," said Anderson. "But to inspire other small businesses is an even greater joy and Independent We Stand has given us a platform to do that. It's about taking less and giving more. That's been our motto for a while now, and it's how we're helping to change the face of retail."

A. Dodson's will receive prizes with a combined value of more than \$10,000, including:

- \$5,000 grand prize

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- \$1,000 STIHL equipment certificate. **STIHL** products are sold exclusively through local, independent servicing dealers and support more than 9,000 STIHL dealers in communities nationwide.
- “Small Business Web Starter Package” from independent web design firm – [The Meridian Group](#)
- Three days/two nights stay at an independent beach resort in Virginia Beach, Va. (valued at \$1,000)
- Plaque to display at winner’s business
- Public relations and social media recognition

The 10 submissions that received the highest number of public votes online were deemed finalists. The winner of “The Indie” was chosen by a panel of contest judges.

The top semi-finalists, in alphabetical order, are:

- [A. Dodson’s](#), an apparel, home décor and gift shop with locations in Suffolk, Norfolk and Virginia Beach, Va.
- [Afterwords Books](#), a bookshop in Edwardsville, Ill.
- [Artsy Fartsy Art Gallery](#), an art gallery in Carson City, Nev.
- [Carr Hardware](#), a hardware supply and rental store with four locations in Mass.
- [Coco’s Cottage](#), a specialty women’s clothing store in Jasper, Ga.
- [Collage](#), a specialty boutique and gift shop in York, Pa.
- [From My Shelf Books & Gifts](#), a new and used bookshop in Wellsboro, Pa.
- [License 2 Grill](#), an American restaurant offering American comfort food in Thornwood, N.Y.
- [One-Eighty Consignment and Thrift](#), a consignment and thrift shop in Albion, Pa.
- [Scout & Morgan Books](#), a bookstore in Cambridge, Minn.

Both the quarter and semi-finalists for this year’s Indie Award will each receive an Independent We Stand Premium Membership.

To learn more visit: www.IndieBizAward.com or <http://independentwestand.org/>.

About Independent We Stand

Independent We Stand is a movement of independent business owners across the country dedicated to informing their communities about the importance of “Buying Local” and how these efforts bolster their local economy. This movement supports all local and national causes committed to boosting local economic development projects. The Independent We Stand movement is co-sponsored by STIHL Inc. and FCA US LLC. www.IndependentWeStand.org

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