



Xochi's Gift Shop

MORE THAN JUST A GIFT SHOP, CRISTINA ZAMORA SELLING MEXICAN HERITAGE ONE PURCHASE AT A TIME

Photos and Story by Phil Eich, Storyville Social, as part of the Michigan Main Street Story Series

"My grandfather opened Xochi's Gift Shop in 1985. We started with just a few little things like CDs, cassettes, pottery, sombreros and maracas. As the community and business grew and we had more money to invest, we began to add more pottery and intricate Mexican art, things that, if you've never traveled to specific places in Mexico or you live in a very metropolitan city you may not have seen before. Through the years, my grandparents and aunt have built relationships with artisans in Mexico, and they've done a very good job of curating and picking out unique and interesting pieces that people love.

The Day of the Dead art, for instance, we didn't have when we first opened. My grandma always thought it was so cool. At first, people were like,

'This is weird. Why do you have skeletons? I don't understand it.' But with exposure, people became more understanding of the holiday and interested in it. Now, we keep it out all year long because people love it.

My grandparents always wanted to educate themselves and others. We want to draw people in, and even if you don't buy anything, you can come here and learn about different places in Mexico. It's a country so rich in culture and history.



Mexicantown is the perfect place for Xochi's. I love the people here. I know that may be kind of cliché, but it's true. I love the people who have been here for a long time and the people who want to come become part of our community, who are building businesses or want to be involved in other ways. I love the food. I love the places to go and eat.

I love the vibrancy that comes alive during festivals like Cinco de Mayo. People love coming to the parade, and whoever wants to be a part of it is welcome. I love this community!"

—Cristina Zamora, Xochi's Gift Shop



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