

EvanstonReview

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Want clean, green and recycled? Shop here

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At Ethical Planet, 1110 W. Davis St., shoppers at her general store can not only pick up a container of hemp milk, also but walk out in shoes made of the same thing.

To be vegan is to not consume animal products in any way. It's the strictest point on what you might call the continuum for vegetarians.

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Fran Horvath, owner of the Evanston's Ethical Planet store wears No Sweat sneakers and hat, made out of cotton canvas and organic cotton, a shirt made of hemp and organic cotton and a purse made out of an Illinois License plate.

(Joel Lerner/Staff Photographer)

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Ethical Planet Healthy Living General Store in Evanston sells products made from recycled material, including towels and totes.

(Joel Lerner/Staff Photographer)

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Fran Horvath tries to fit Barret Hedeem's new, biodegradable, chlorine-free yoga mat into his free canvas Ethical Planet bag that comes with any order more than \$50.

(Joel Lerner/Staff Photographer)

Nearly 7 percent of adults in the United States say they never eat meat, according to the Vegetarian Resource Organization. And that number has been growing. Those who follow stricter vegetarian guidelines make smaller groups.

Still, even if you're not a vegan, a walk through Ethical Planet or other stores focused on environmental causes, can not only deliver good shopping, but education to boot.

I was really surprised by the amount of produced foods available to vegans these days. For example, owner Fran Horvath sells vegan jerky and vegan marshmallows.

But what's really amazing is that all the regular, everyday products are made with the vegan or eco-conscious lifestyle in mind.

She sells belts made of all natural materials (like bottle caps and car seatbelt buckles) and toothbrushes made of old yogurt cups.

"And when you're done with the toothbrush, you can send it back and they make park benches out of them," she said.

A pack of five note cards made of junk mail (you can read some of the junk mail blathering if you look hard) goes for \$5.99. Vellum envelopes are included.

With so many students and environmentally conscious people in the area, Evanston was a logical location for Ethical Planet, said Horvath, who lives in Skokie.

The area has become a bit of a "green" retail district with on-the-same-block neighbors like Fit & Frisky (natural products for pets); Tink-Tinks (sells organic cotton baby clothes); and Wild Tree organic cafe, which also offers an organic food co-op.

Move over a bit south in Evanston and there is another store focused on shopping green.

At 702 Main St., Healthy Green Goods is full of items that are meant to make not only the planet healthier, but you, too.

Owner Marny Turvill bought the store from a couple about a year ago when she decided to stop practicing as a pediatrician. She loved the work, but Turvill said that over the years, she realized chemicals used in the healthcare industry -- many of them to ward off germs -- were making her sick.

Within the store, there is clothing, personal care items, water bottles that come with their own water filters and more.

You can choose from a large number of environmentally friendly cleaning products. Customers can even bring back containers to the store and refill them, thus reducing cost and waste.

Healthy Green Good also sells natural mattresses and other bed products.

Product information shows that the mattresses are made with organic materials whenever possible and are biodegradable or recyclable. No chemicals are used on the mattresses, which Turvill points out, is where people typically spend one-third of their life.

Wool from organically raised sheep is used as batting and helps make the mattresses flame retardant.

Another key benefit to some of the beds is that they can fit through tiny openings, like into an attic bedroom. Many of the mattresses use natural rubber and because that material is so heavy, the mattress unzips so that layers of the inside materials can be rolled up and carried separately.

King-sized rubber mattresses range from \$2,100 to \$9,600, while king-sized all natural innerspring mattresses range from \$1,350 to \$3,600.