

July/August 2017

# floriology®

EXPRESSIONS OF FLOWERS®



**COMMUNITY MINDED**  
JEFF GASTER OF CITIFLORAL NURTURES  
LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS IN NYC

**ON THE EDGE**  
CELEBRATING THE FLORAL ARTISTRY  
OF LAURA DALUGA, AIFD

**GARDEN VARIETY**  
EXPLORING DIVERSE IDEAS AND HOT  
TRENDS FOR SPRING & GARDEN 2018

**bloomnet**  
World-Class Florists Worldwide Delivery

by Mike Pucci

# Community

## CitiFloral nurtures local relationships in its New York City neighborhood

# MINDED

**Even in one of the largest, most populated and most bustling cities in the world,** the success of a retail business can often come down to building and enhancing local ties in the surrounding community.

CitiFloral, a fixture for more than 30 years in the Yorkville section of Manhattan's Upper East Side, embodies the very definition of a local florist, an integral part of the fabric of the neighborhood—and a source that people in the neighborhood rely on to provide friendly service and some of the most beautiful floral arrangements and gift baskets to be found anywhere.

"We opened the shop in 1986, starting it from scratch," says owner Jeff Gaster. "Over the years we've grown the business extensively, and we are very well known and respected in our community, as well as throughout New York City."

In addition to a continual stream of walk-in customers who trust the dedicated CitiFloral team to create the perfect gifts for their special occasions, the shop handles a steady flow of wire orders and is the go-to florist for many funeral homes, hospitals, nursing homes, and hotels all over the Big Apple.

From a marketing perspective, CitiFloral offers its customers several innovative incentives—including free delivery and no service charge for online orders. This strategy has had a positive impact on increasing website sales. Also, the shop is very active on its Facebook page, posting daily with local content.

Still, it's the connection that Jeff and his staff have with local residents that truly sets the business apart. That connection was apparent during one of the darkest times in our country's history. Immediately following the September 11, 2001, attacks in lower Manhattan, the shop began giving away flowers as a way to help brighten the spirits of people in the city as they struggled with what



had happened. "We wanted to do something that would make a difference, a simple gesture that at least temporarily made people feel a little better," says Jeff.

Today, giving away flowers has become an ongoing tradition at CitiFloral, as each day free flowers are placed just outside the shop's doors for passers-by and local residents to take and enjoy. "People love it," states Jeff. "And many people who are just strolling by the shop also come in as a result of the flower giveaways."

Jeff's emphasis on the importance of having a strong local focus for his business also extends to a very popular initiative created several years ago by 1-800-Flowers.com and BloomNet: The Local Artisan Program. As you may know, the program gives designers from across America a forum to showcase their talents, while providing retail florists with an opportunity to increase their sales via the 1-800-Flowers.com website.

Jeff states that he believes the Local Artisan program "is the single most unique and innovative concept involving a collaboration between a wire service and its florists." He adds, "It combines the power of the 1-800-Flowers brand with the design talents and fulfillment abilities of local florists. For us, the program has meant a big marketing boost, and more sales." 🌸

## FAST FACTS

**Owner:** Jeff Gaster

**Location:** New York, New York

**Established:** 1986

**Employees:** 6



 For further information about CitiFloral go to [citifloral.net](http://citifloral.net) and [facebook.com/citifloral](https://www.facebook.com/citifloral). To learn more about the Local Artisan Program, visit [1800flowers.com/local-artisans](http://1800flowers.com/local-artisans), email [localartisan@bloomnet.net](mailto:localartisan@bloomnet.net), or call 1-800-BloomNet (1-800-256-6663).