

Can You Feel the Love?

BY MARY WESTBROOK



Industry members across the country spread goodwill and flower love through SAF's Petal It Forward.

COME TOGETHER

The floral industry stepped up for SAF's 2018 Petal It Forward. Consumers and businesses posted messages on social media and shared candid shots of the day. From left to right: Kitayama Brothers, Sakata Seed America and Floralive in Monterey, California; Ross Plants & Flowers in Orefield, Pennsylvania; Fifty Flowers in Boise, Idaho; Ashland-Addison Florist Co. in Chicago; Trig's, locations around Wisconsin; and Sunnywoods Florist in Chatham, New Jersey.

When Bruce Anderson stopped in a local deli in late October to hand out flowers, one recipient eyed him with suspicion. "How much?" the woman asked. "No charge," said Anderson. Moehring Woods Flowers in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, was taking part in Petal It Forward, an initiative spearheaded by the Society of American Florists in which floral industry members give recipients two bouquets, one to keep and one to pass on to someone else.

The next day, the woman appeared in Anderson's shop, tears in her eyes. She'd given the second bouquet to her 16-year-old son, who was struggling socially and academically. She hadn't seen him smile in months. "Flowers for me?" the teen asked, taken aback by the gesture. Then, a small miracle: He grinned. "Call me crazy," the woman said to Anderson, "but I think getting flowers from you yesterday was divine intervention."



Happy Headlines

In addition to local participants taking SAF's advice to reach out to their area media, SAF also enhanced those efforts through key public relations tactics to capture media attention and drive reporters to a list of Petal It Forward participants. SAF's PR efforts included the strategically timed distribution of a media advisory and press release to broadcast and print media nationwide, as well as targeted pitching and follow-up to markets where events were happening. To enhance their influencer marketing efforts, SAF has also partnered with key bloggers and influencers with large social media followings to spread the news about the floral industry's large-scale random act of kindness. Read more at safnow.org/moreonline.

-M.W.

The most amazing part: That poignant experience happened over and over again on Oct. 24 during SAF's 2018 Petal It Forward. In big cities and rural towns, in red states and blue states, in hip coffee shops, longtime diners, retirement homes and on busy street corners — Americans of all ages and backgrounds experienced the joy of giving and receiving flowers.

This year, florists in 410 cities in every state plus Washington, D.C., and Colombia signed on to participate, hosting 457 local events. At each event, recipients moved from surprise to delight — and sometimes tears. In social media posts and news stories, those recipients shared their stories and told countless others how good these floral gifts made them feel.

"We are thrilled by the enthusiasm of the floral industry to come together for a common goal to promote flower power in their local communities," said SAF's Vice President of Marketing Jennifer Sparks. "We know that giving flowers

PERSONAL STORIES One of the biggest successes of the day? Getting customers to post about their own positive experiences, as this recipient did, after receiving flowers from Dietz Flower Shop in Seguin, Texas.

is a gesture of connection — one that can bring people, even strangers, closer together. We showed the country a random act of kindness at its finest!"

At press time, SAF was still collecting stories from the year's event. Visit safnow.org/moreonline to read more about the individual efforts of growers, wholesalers, retailers and suppliers; review some of the top social posts from the industry and consumers; and find out about the high-quality news stories generated nationwide. 🌸

Mary Westbrook is the editor in chief of Floral Management. mwestbrook@safnow.org



GOOD VIBES Botanica International Design & Décor Studio handed out bouquets in Tampa, Florida, and scored prime news coverage with a story on ABC's "Good Morning Tampa Bay." Reporters highlighted the giveaway and the results of SAF's new study on the powerful, stress-reducing effects of flowers.

