



# DOWNTOWN DIALOGUE

## Lower Manhattan Is Where I Want to Be for the Holidays

BY LIZ BERGER



Downtown Alliance is launching holiday lights for the 2011 season.

The holiday season is one of my favorite times of year, a time to appreciate what's really important in life: family, friends and community.

It's a time when Lower Manhattan seems most like a little village, with decorative lights glowing warmly from lampposts on cobblestone streets, and great festive trees brightening City Hall Park, the South Street Seaport, the Stock Exchange and countless building lobbies. I love how Lower Manhattan, the city's oldest neighborhood, seems to harken back to an earlier era, from Stone Street to Front Street to Trinity Church. And, I love how our one square mile has everything we need.

It's a time to think about all we've been through together, all the places we're going, and the enormous changes that are making our community stronger and even more dynamic. It's a time to bake cookies for neighbors, nod to the college students who now call Lower Manhattan home and bundle up for a stroll to the water's edge. It's a time to meet old friends for hot chocolate, at La Maison du Chocolat or Financier, stop in for a snack at Crepes du Nord or Takahachi Bakery, or use the Downtown Connection to window shop from Front Street to Warren Street and every street in between.

The holidays are a time to take time—to enjoy old favorites, like *The Nutcracker* at the World Financial Center, *The Messiah* at Trinity Church, the Family Hanukkah Celebration at the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Victorian Celebration in the British Garden at Hanover Square, or to start a new holiday tradition with a visit to the National Museum of the American Indian at Bowling Green or the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York Harbor.

It's a time for good cheer—even if the national economy is giving us precious little to cheer about—and a time for presents, small or large, store-bought or homemade. This year,

two of Lower Manhattan's signature retailers are celebrating milestone anniversaries: 50 years in Lower Manhattan for Century 21 Department Stores and 40 years for J&R Music and Computer World. At the same time, T.J. Maxx has opened a brand-new store at 14 Wall Street. That gives Lower Manhattan more than 625 places where shoppers can find the perfect gift, from My.Suit on Broad Street to the World Trade Art Gallery on Trinity Place.

It's a time for old and new—for exploring restaurants and retailers that have opened in the past year, and for going back to time-honored favorites. And, it's a time to invite friends and family to see what Lower Manhattan has to offer, perhaps with a stay at one of our 18 hotels.

This year, the Downtown Alliance is making it easy to take advantage of all of Lower Manhattan's attractions. We're releasing a new shopping and dining guide, we've expanded our mobile phone app, and we're constantly updating the event calendar and searchable map on our new website at [www.DowntownNY.com](http://www.DowntownNY.com)—all in time for your holiday plans.

Meanwhile, the Downtown Alliance joins City Hall in supporting Small Business Saturday on November 26. American Express cardholders who shop at independently owned small businesses can get \$25 off their next credit card statement. For more information, go to [www.smallbusinesssaturday.com](http://www.smallbusinesssaturday.com).

The numbers tell the story. With 56,000 residents, 309,000 workers, and nine million annual visitors, Lower Manhattan is where everyone wants to be—every day, in every season. But home is where the heart is, and during the holidays, Lower Manhattan is more compelling than ever. It's where I want to be.

*Liz Berger is President of the Downtown Alliance.*