

# National Record Store Day celebrates independent stores, vinyl community

By Kimberly Kapela, Staff Reporter

Lines of music lovers formed out the doors of Reckless Records at 5 a.m. last weekend, eager to dig through crates of vinyl records and find exclusive band merchandise when the doors to the shop opened for National Record Store Day.

Thousands of record stores across the globe celebrated the 15th anniversary of National Record Store Day and the culture that brings together music communities and local musicians on Saturday.

Reckless Records, 26 E. Madison St., is part of a larger chain throughout Chicago that sells vinyl LPs, CDs, DVDs, cassettes and video games. The store has served as a music staple in the city since 1988. For the holiday, Reckless Records gave away exclusive posters, t-shirts and limited edition releases specifically pressed for Record Store Day.

Kelso Antoine, a record store clerk and sales associate at Reckless Records, said customers are drawn to record stores because of the longing for a physical copy of the music they love instead of just streaming it.

“To music lovers, it feels kind of comforting to know that, regardless of what happens to streaming services, if there’s a record store around, you can pick up a CD or pick up your favorite record and put it on,” Antoine said.

Alan Heffelfinger, the owner of Oak Park Records, 179 S. Oak Park Ave., said it is a milestone for National Record Store Day to hit its 15th anniversary.

“Record Store Day has definitely helped bring used record stores and new record stores back into focus,” Heffelfinger said. “When I bought the store in 2004, record stores really weren’t that popular. With the help of Record Store Day and all of the advertising they’ve done, all of the press that they have received over the years has helped people realize record stores are still around, and it’s brought people back to the stores.”

Heffelfinger said the customers loyal to indie record stores have helped those businesses survive through the pandemic.

To celebrate the holiday, Heffelfinger ordered Record Store Day exclusive vinyl releases, and his wife and kids made chocolate chip cookies for the customers to celebrate the day.

“Hopefully everybody finds the records they’re looking for,” Heffelfinger said. “The day ends better when people got smiles on



Sam Tucker

Vinyl enthusiasts fill Dusty Groove’s, 1120 N. Ashland Ave., on National Record Store Day, combing through the rows and rows of analog music.



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Chicagoans lined up out the door of Suga Records, 1272 N. Milwaukee Ave., waiting for the chance to add to their vinyl collections. Sam Tucker

their faces rather than disappointments.”

Vinyl lover Jessica Riccelli is an avid collector and regularly supports independent record stores.

“I think [Record Store Day] is such a cute way to support local record stores. Specifically living in Chicago, there’s a lot of places you wouldn’t realize that are there because we’re so used to hearing [of] only big-name record stores,” Riccelli said. “It’s a fun way to actually discover new artists, CDs, albums and vinyls or whatever your niche is, instead of always finding mainstream songs.”



Reckless Records, 1379 N. Milwaukee Ave., saw its records flying off the shelves with Chicagoans soaking up the deals of the occasion. Sam Tucker

Riccelli’s favorite record store is Reckless Records, and it stands out to her because of the eclectic album artwork everywhere and the variety of big name and local artists, while being a “charming and beautiful” store.

Riccelli credited music lovers sharing albums through social media and a bigger presence of vinyl in record stores with helping to increase record sales and the success of Record Store Day.

“There’s so many different components that go into a record store beyond just the music itself, but [especially] the people that work there and organize all the shelves,” Riccelli said. “There’s a lot of different ways you can support [record stores] by throwing names out there and giving business cards to people. I know I love doing that. ... I think that’s a super cute way to support them by letting people know that there are local record stores more so than just mainstream ones.”

Riccelli said it is important to support record stores beyond the holiday and to keep an eye out for new artists and emerging genres and albums.

“I’m going to purchase [a record] and give it a go because you never really know what you’re going to find when you’re only looking at album artwork when you’re purchasing, and it’s truly not until you go home that you get to use your record player and listen to it in full,” Riccelli said.