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By Crystal Chavez



## **Black Friday Babysitters**

Many Central Texans braved the lines and hit the stores before the break of dawn to take advantage of Black Friday sales. The outlet malls in San Marcos have been open since 10 p.m. last night. Instead of spending money, however, some Austinites are making extra cash off the Black Friday craze.

Ashley Voisine, a nursing assistant in Austin, said she usually works overtime and that her days off are few and far between. She also has two children.

“I was actually supposed to work on Black Friday, but I couldn’t find a baby sitter. Well, I found one, but she was charging me \$22 an hour and I couldn’t afford that,” Voisine said. “So I got someone to take my shift and I thought, I’ll do child care for people like me who can’t afford \$22 an hour.”

Voisine advertised her child-sitting services online for Black Friday by posting to websites such as Craigslist and Sittercity.

“Your kids don’t want to be out there with you guys, I promise! My kids cannot stand getting into the crowds. It’s not fun. It’s aggravating for the parents because they have to worry about their children. It’s just a very stressful situation overall,” she said.

Sittercity spokeswoman Melissa Marchwick said the site lists about 3,000 sitters in the Austin area.

“You know, we’ve been seeing a growth in Black Friday job posts for sure over the past few years as it’s become a national pastime for shoppers,” Marchwick said. “We saw an 80 percent increase this year in Black Friday job postings alone, so that tells you what kind of demand these sitters are in for Black Friday.”

That demand is something 15-year-old Jamie Tobin anticipated. She wants some extra Christmas money and to help her mother out with necessities like gas.

“That’s another reason I’m doing it, is to get more money because my mom is a single parent,” Tobin said. “We try and save as much money so if anything ever happens, or just like that weekend off that we need to go and do something, we can do it without worrying if we have enough money in the bank.”

Craigslist postings show people are marketing their childcare services for throughout the holiday season. This option can give parents more time to do their shopping and to get a little break during this hectic time of the year. Of course, it’s up to parents to check the references.