

# NEWTON TAB

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## Giving busy consumers a chance to buy time

By Josh Gordon

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Tired of sitting in traffic, running errands, looking for a parking space or waiting in line?

Lisa Schreider, at least, is banking that you are. She's made a business of taking these day-to-day hassles out of other people's lives.

She calls herself a creative concierge, and makes a living doing grocery shopping, picking up dry cleaning, doing holiday shopping and running various other errands for her clients.

"I can help my clients free up time in their lives to do what they want to do or like to do," she said.

Besides running errands for hire under the business name, Hands of Time, Schreider is a professional organizer and researcher, and does everything from organizing kitchen cabinets to finding information on the Internet. She charges a flat, hourly fee for her services, though she declined to say how much.

"She has been very helpful on the Internet," said customer Sara Young of Needham, who has used Schreider's services off and on for two years. "She's found things online for me, and it's just expanded a lot of things I haven't even thought of. They are ideas [for finding information that] I hadn't had that are very helpful."

Schreider considers her local roots a valuable asset to her work. After growing up in Newton, she attended Brandeis University for college, and then Boston University for post-graduate work.

"Because I grew up in this area and I'm still here, I have a big network," she said. "I know a lot about the city, and I know where to get what resources."

A significant number of her clients are senior citizens, Schrei-



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL MANNING

**Lisa Schreider, who makes a living running errands for people, exits Walgreens in Newton Centre with a long list in hand.**

der said, who need help with shopping, banking and errands. Cyrille Flax, of Brookline, relies on her for "everything [she needs] from the outside world."

"She does everything for me, because I'm sort of limited in where I can go," said Flax. "And always with a smile."

And to make things easier and more efficient, Schreider develops a personalized shopping list for all her consistent clients. After three or four trips to the supermarket, she makes a checklist of all the person's favorite items.

"It's a time-saver for them and for me," she said. "They just check off the items [or the specific brands] that they want, so that it doesn't have to be written out each

time."

There is also a more general list for first-time customers to use if they don't care about the particular brand of product.

Schreider got the idea about two years ago, after she lost her job as a public relations manager for several dot-com companies when the information technology bubble burst. While she was looking for a new job, she put signs up around Newton, which advertised that she would perform odd jobs, such as grocery shopping and errand running, for people.

"I just thought that I love to shop and I love to help people, and I just combined all of that," Schreider said.

She added that "it just sort of blossomed" from a temporary fix while she looked for a new public relations post into a full-time job as interest in her services increased. Schreider currently has about a half-dozen consistent clients, and more people that use her services in an "as needed" fashion.

For Schreider, one of the best parts of her job is the variety in both the activities and the people she meets.

"This job never gets boring," she said. "And it's a great way to meet different people. I get to know the families and it's been wonderful."

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