

“More Gen Z guests are choosing to return to their local theatre to see more movies — what do you believe is driving this trend?”

The past couple of years have seen an increase in the trend of Gen Z guests returning to movie theaters. Many different reasons could be the cause for this, but primarily, it's due to a desire for nostalgia, an escape, and supporting local businesses.

As people get older, they tend to look back on their lives and miss the things that defined their childhood. We see proof of this fact in numerous ways: people rewatching shows and movies they obsessed over in their youth, collecting things they loved growing up, or even getting tattoos of childhood memories. Once kids are old enough to have a disposable income, it becomes easier to relive these childhood dreams and memories. This is likely a reason for the recent urge to watch movies in theaters. I know growing up, getting to go to the movies was a special treat. Now that I make my own money, it is a lot more feasible to go to the theater more regularly. This is often the case for many others my age as well.

Alongside people wanting to relive a part of their childhood, movies and films are a way to escape reality for a moment. There are no phones, no talking, just you and the movie. With the current state of the world filled with constant arguments and devastation, the countless mental health crises many in my generation face, and the overwhelming pressures of work, school, family, and just life, sometimes it gets too hard to live in the moment. Being able to escape for a couple of hours into a whole other universe, a different life behind a screen, and forget about every agonizing thing happening in our world and our lives is exactly what people need.

One final reason for the recent trend of going to the theater could easily be the desire to support local businesses. As the world keeps turning, people keep becoming more aware of just how unethical vast corporate empires can be, which often makes people yearn to support their local companies, the ones run by friends, neighbors, people just like them. This ethical dilemma has pushed many people to choose small businesses over global ones, causing them to find themselves at their hometown theater.

Elaborating on these personal connections, the theater will always have many different people from all different backgrounds there for different reasons. The thing that they all have in common is a love for the movies. Theaters bring people together and allow them to enjoy films as a group.

As a movie theater employee, I have seen people come out of movies talking to people other than those they went in with. I have personally witnessed movies bringing different people together. Sharing experiences with strangers creates comradery and allows them to connect. In the age of social media, it's become immensely difficult to create connections with people, but the movies provide a space that encourages people to bond and relate to one another, learning about how they view things.

Whether people want to get away from life for a couple of hours or just want to see a cool new movie, they'll find themselves in a place that allows bonds to be created and communities to evolve. People seek community, nostalgia, and escape, and that's what they get when they go to the movies.