

# Main Line Parent

## American Girl Store Opens at King of Prussia Mall

*Gwyneth K. Shaw*

The wait is over: [American Girl's](#) pop-up store is open at the [King of Prussia Mall](#).

The 3,400-square-foot store will be open through January 31, 2017. While the local model is a scaled-down version of the flagship stores in cities such as New York City, Washington, D.C., and Chicago, it does have a wide selection of dolls and the many accessories that go with all of them, from doll beds to clothes.

"If you're familiar with American Girl, we brought it to you," said Stacey Martland, the general manager of the NYC store, who was in King of Prussia to help open the new store. "If you're not, this is a great introduction."

The store does feature a two-chair doll hair salon, which offers styling, ear piercing, and nail painting. Appointments are available, but must be made in the store and are on a first-come, first-served basis, Martland said.

The King of Prussia location is one of seven pop-up stores American Girl opening this fall around the country, and Martland called it a "test and learn" situation. This is the company's first foray into the greater Philadelphia market. King of Prussia was attractive, Martland said, because it's well-known nationwide, packed with equally famous brand names, and draws both tourists and locals.

The store's grand opening is happening September 10, from 10 am to 9 pm, and September 11, from 11 am to 6 pm. You'll need a ticket on both days to get into the store; they'll start handing those out at 9 am, Martland said. American Girl is on the top level, near Macy's and the Gap, not far from the [brand-new corridor](#) that unites the mall's main areas.

Tickets will be numbered, and the store will admit relatively small groups so that everyone is safe and it's not too crowded at any one time. But the ticketing system means you don't have to wait in line, and can wander the mall and come back when it's your turn — and they'll let you in, even if you're a little behind when others near your number went in, she said.

Each child who visits during opening weekend will get an American Girl gift, while supplies last, Martland said. And the store will have crafts set up outside the doors to keep everyone occupied before they go in. Everyone who comes in will also have a chance to win this year's [Girl of the Year doll, Lea](#).

The store is selling American Girl's newest historical doll, [Melody Ellison](#), a 9-year-old growing up in Detroit in 1964. She sports a turquoise pillbox hat, sunglasses, and an "Equal Rights in '63" red, white, and blue button.

"She's hopeful, and she's spiritual and powerful, and she's really growing up in a turbulent time," Martland said of the doll's backstory. Melody's family faces racial prejudice, and part of her character's journey is learning to speak up, Martland said. American Girl had an advisory board work on Melody's development "because she is so important," she said.

The store also carries [Bitty Baby](#) dolls, and [Wellie Wishers](#), dolls aimed at the 5-to-7-year-old set that are smaller and less expensive than the dolls for older kids. You can even buy clear wellington boots, and patterned socks to match each doll's own boots.

The pop-up store won't replace the pilgrimage to New York or Washington that have become something of a rite of passage for American Girl lovers. But if time — or money — is keeping you from visiting those meccas, the King of Prussia store is the next best thing.

“This is a curated version of what we offer,” Martland said. “We’ve really brought in the best of what we have.”