



Small business
owners share
BIG
passion for DC
and community


An accidental ceramics class inspires a young woman to head out on a journey of self-discovery – and her own pottery business.

Two men turn their college friendship into a business venture of a sports bar with a community-minded mission.

A desire to bring back a dying art prompts a woman to utilize her business degrees to open a quilt shop.

In this issue, we share stories of how several Defiance College alumni/ae started their own small business.

Their stories are personal. Each is distinctive. But, all share a common thread – their love for Defiance College and how their shared DC experience aided or even inspired them to start a business.



her chosen



When she was growing up in Northwest Ohio, Jennifer Creighton, now Jennifer Beachy in recent marriage, had not expected herself to be a full-time artist. In fact, she wasn't even interested in art as a profession.

When she attended Defiance College, Jen earned a Bachelor of Arts, graduating in 2009 with a degree in international studies and a minor in religious studies. During her senior year, the path toward her future shifted dramatically when she selected an art course, as required to graduate. At the time, Jen was displeased that she had to take a class for a subject she wasn't pursuing as a career, thinking it would be a waste of time when she was busy finishing her actual degree.

For practical reasons, ceramics was her chosen course. There were no paper tests, as in art history courses, and supplies were provided for ceramics, unlike in the painting class, which would save her money. Jen reasoned she could save additional money by giving people homemade Christmas gifts.

During ceramics class, Jen realized a strong enjoyment of the art and bonded with her ceramics professor, Steve Smith. Because she enjoyed working with clay so much, she took both the Fall and Spring courses before she graduated.

After graduation, she worked with Smith as her pottery mentor before she took a break from clay and served the non-profit company Americorps as a Volunteer In Service To America (VISTA) for one year. She returned to working with Smith on her pottery techniques and, after he retired from Defiance College, Jen started sharing studio space with Smith and potter Rebecca Graves at the 4 Corners Art Gallery in Northeast Indiana. She did this part-time at first, also working for two years with RISE, Inc., before becoming a full-time potter in May 2014.

Thanks to the shared gallery, Jen and the other artists were able to spend time together and collaborate on ideas, marketing techniques, and pottery products. "From Steve, I learned the science of clay and glaze, how to throw and the mechanics of making, and the rules so I knew how to break them," Jen explained. "From Rebecca, I learned how to build a cohesive product line and aesthetic, a vision, and how to market. Steve gave me the vital working knowledge and the place in which to do the work, and Rebecca fleshed that out by coaching me and helping me see how to market and sell the work I was making. It was the perfect combination to help me realize success."

VISIT JENNIFER'S WEBSITE
WWW.FUNCTIONPOTTERY.COM.

COURSE

The story of a young alumna's unexpected journey into self-discovery.

By Kristi Jo Leaders '09, Assistant Director of Marketing



Due to expenses involved in a ceramics studio with kilns, glaze, clay, and other tools, she imagined she would not have reached full-time as quickly if she started out entirely her own. Because she did not have much debt or other financial obligations after graduation, such as a mortgage or children, Jen was mobile and flexible as a budding potter.

Over the years, Jen has discovered and refined her own style, creating several recognizable product lines, such as Color Pop, with custom-made glazes. The designs that she makes are intended to be functional yet beautiful, to fulfill a practical need while being meaningful and unique. All pieces are individually handcrafted, making them extra memorable.

In addition to her fellow artists at 4 Corners Gallery, Jen further contributes her accomplishments to her husband, Grant Beachy, who serves as a supportive pillar and has always encouraged her toward being a stand-alone potter, even helping her set up her business website and taking photographs of her finished products for sale.

Though not a fan of social media, she recognizes the value of having a social presence as someone with her own business. After all, if people are not aware of your work in order to find and buy it, your business will not prove productive. Similarly, utilizing simple, clear tags that are likely to be searched is another of her practices when it comes to being found online. Jen also identifies the importance of maintaining a stock of products, especially in a series, in order to provide timely service to customers.

From start to finish in her venture into clay, it took Jen only five and a half years to become infatuated in the art, practice and fine tune it, and turn it into full-time employment.

She continues to be successful, feeling fortunate that she can support herself as a self-employed artist. Currently, pottery from her business, Function Pottery, is sold online and at more than twenty stockists around the country – and even in Canada. Function Pottery is represented by Jen at craft and art show events throughout the year, though she has cut back on appearances in favor of focusing on online commerce.

The next page in Jen's story is putting together her very own studio in the city where Grant lives. Although pottery may not have been the life adventure she expected, it is one that she loves. Her success as a young entrepreneur goes to show that hard work, dedication, and a willingness to step out of one's comfort zone can lead to attaining unforeseen dreams.



Personal Connections

Jeff and Sue Strausbaugh connect with DC and the local community

By Kathy PUNCHES '96,
Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Every college campus needs a neighborhood coffee house so that students, faculty and staff have a friendly gathering spot – for conversation, study, and of course, just a good cup of coffee.

Defiance College is fortunate to have such place, and it's all thanks to a DC alumni couple, Jeff and Sue Strausbaugh.

From the patio tables in front of Biggby Coffee, customers can look across Clinton Street and see the front lawn of campus. It's a natural fit, and college folks gravitate in large numbers to the shop's inviting door and tantalizing aromas. They mingle with

local residents, visitors to the city, and baristas, many of whom are DC students.

For the Strausbaughs, the coffee shop was born of two deeply personal connections – their loyalty to Defiance College and the community, and a family tragedy.

The couple dated when Sue was a student at DC. After they married and started a family, Jeff enrolled. Working and helping to raise his family, he took a combination of evening and morning classes to finish his business degree. He graduated in 1983, on the same day as their third child's baptism.

Jeff went on to the University of Toledo College of Law where he found himself well prepared for law school. Competing with students from all over the country, he was able to perform in the top percentage academically. "I was proud I had a degree from Defiance College," he says.

He recalls taking classes from numerous familiar faculty – Frank Bowen, Don Knueve, Garnett Smith, Robert Boehm, Henry Diehl, Randy Buchman, Hermann Wiebe, Tony DeJute and Steve Ruyle.

Sue majored in recreational therapy during her DC years. She left college to stay home with their growing family, but fondly remembers taking classes from professors that included Darnell Clevenger and Duane Hocking.

After law school, Jeff opened a private law practice in Defiance – from 1986 until 2008. Sue was the bookkeeper for the office. During that time, Jeff was elected Defiance County Prosecutor, a position he held for several years. In 2008, he was elected Defiance County Common Pleas Judge, Probate and Juvenile Division, and at that time turned his law practice over to their daughter, Erin. He is also a frequent instructor of evening classes in DC's criminal justice program.

In 2001, the Strausbaughs' lives were upended when their daughter, Erica, died from injuries she sustained in a traffic accident. The family was devastated, and after several years of trying to deal with the grief, Sue realized she needed something to help with the healing.

Erica had attended culinary school, and one of her dreams was to open a coffee or sandwich shop. The Strausbaughs decided that they would fulfill Erica's plan and open a coffee shop in Defiance. They looked for a franchise that they thought would be a good fit and ultimately decided on Biggby. "We visited a lot of Biggby shops and found them all to be consistent ..." says Sue.

They purchased property on North Clinton Street, directly across from the DC campus, and opened the shop in February 2007.


"The college was a big part of the reason we picked this site," says Sue. "We really, really enjoy the connection with the college. It's uplifting to see the young people and professors."

Sue manages the business and enjoys working with young people employed to work in the shop. The annual DC fall job fair is a great opportunity for Biggby to recruit and employ staff.

Things like open mic night and Biggby as an option on the students' meal plan are other ways Sue has worked to provide connections between the shop and the college. She has also made a commitment to be involved in the local community, promoting events such as Tools for Schools, Relay for Life, Backpack Buddies, and breast cancer awareness.

Jeff and Sue are not the only Strausbaughs to attend Defiance College. Their son, Stan, graduated in 2013. Jeff's brother, Sam, graduated in 1985, and Sam's son, Spencer, earned his degree in 2012.

Biggby will celebrate its 10th anniversary in a few months. For the Strausbaughs, it's been a restorative time in their lives that has included the arrivals of six grandchildren. For Defiance College, the coffee shop has become a close friend, its door always open, a place for camaraderie, collaboration, and unending cups of good coffee.



"We really, really enjoy the connection with the college. It's uplifting to see the young people and professors."

DEFIANCE Therapeutic MASSAGE and WELLNESS CENTER



Carrie Radzik '03

Alternative Care

When Carrie Radzik, ACT, LMT, and NMT, '03, opened Defiance Therapeutic Massage and Wellness Center in 2010, she wanted to pursue a niche previously unfilled in the Defiance area: providing the community with alternative care options.

“There’s an importance in relaxation massage and how it can help the body,” Carrie says. Now, specialized clinical massage draws most of the customers to her practice. Defiance Therapeutic offers neuromuscular work, which can alleviate back pain, neck pain, headaches, and migraines. In addition to clinical based massage, they also offer relaxation massage, couples’ massage, orofacial massage, reiki and reflexology, pregnancy massage, oncology massage, clinical skincare, and the Graston Technique.

Carrie credits her success to the professionalism instilled in her during her time at Defiance College, where she earned her degrees in Sports Medicine and Wellness and Corporate Fitness. The Athletic Training staff, including Professor Kevin Tong, provided a vast field of knowledge, and taught the importance of effective communication. Her experience with the Service Leaders taught her to manage events and work with diverse people and personalities to reach a common goal.

She also participated in the Disney College program, interning at Disney World for a summer, where she took business courses and learned skills she would later apply to building her own business. It was an experience she would not have pursued, if not for DC.

“Defiance College produces well-rounded students,” she says, and her time at DC helped mold and structure the person she is today, and to recognize the importance of community involvement. She continues to engage with the community through participation in Christmas for Kids, volunteering for golf outing fundraisers, and providing a Give Back day to the community. For one day a year, Defiance Therapeutic gives chair massages to those who normally give back to others, such as hospice providers, hospital employees, the fire department, police department, and Kaitlyn’s Cottage respite care workers.

Carrie completed massage school before opening her own practice, and currently teaches Neuromuscular/Myofascial Certification all over the state of Ohio. She’s also a distributor for Young Living Essential Oils, and gives talks for children with special needs and their families.

Carrie lives in Defiance with her husband, Kevin, whom she met at DC. They have three children: Kady, Carter, and Kenley.

The

Quilt Shoppe

TURNING A PASSION INTO A BUSINESS

By Michele Tinker, Interim Director of Development

Some people open a new business to make money. Jean Blankenship '06 and '09 opened The Quilt Shoppe in Bryan, Ohio to help bring back a dying art and to encourage a new generation to make something beautiful with their hands.

Jean received both her bachelor's in accounting and her master's at Defiance College as a non-traditional student, through the Center for Adult Programs.

Opening the store was originally her husband, Tom's, idea. Jean had recently gotten into quilting as a hobby when on a trip, she and Tom visited someone who operated a fabric store out of her home. He suggested it as a business venture to Jean. It was an idea that appealed to her.

Being the proprietor of The Quilt Shoppe has been a good right brain-left brain combination for Jean. While she loves the artistic side of her business, her significant financial background acquired under the tutelage of Professor Mike Gallagher allows her to do the payroll, taxes, balance sheets, and provides the supporting background she needs to run the business.

However, Jean contends, anyone in this type of business is doing it out of love for the art and not to get rich. "I do it out of love and enjoyment of the personal relationships."

As a business, any quilt shop is a risk. The margin of profit is low – and new lines of fabrics come out every quarter from a variety of designers. Plus, fabric now comes in 15-yard bolts, where previously it was ten yards – so each purchase Jean makes for the shop is more of a commitment.

The challenge, she explains, is to select for your market – always a risk since there is no "typical" customer. The people Jean sees in her shop range from 20-30 year olds who are just learning to quilt to seniors who have been quilting all their lives. Tastes range from traditional patterns to bold colors and patterns for the modern quilting fans.

Jean credits her husband and children with being very supportive. Two of the youngsters fill in at the shop for gas money and one is working on her website. Her daughter Aarika (Alabata) has already made several quilts. "Maybe she'll teach her kids how to quilt," Jean hopes.

Defiance College is where Jean met Tom, who was also completing his master's degree through Weekend College.

The Quilt Shoppe in Bryan offers a full selection of quilting fabrics, patterns, books, sewing notions, and accessories. Additionally, classes are offered throughout the year, for quilters of all skill levels.

Her next step is developing fabric sales online – and her website is currently up and running: www.thequiltshoppebryan.com.



Jean Blankenship '06 and '09

Viewing Life in

By Kathy Punches '96, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Enter JBO's Fine Arts Academy in downtown Defiance and step into a world of amazing color. Whimsical murals in vibrant shades cover the walls. Visitors can't help but be energized by the bright and breezy palate.

For Jennifer (Bok) Boyd '99, JBO's (Just Be Original) fulfills her dream of offering arts to the community. She welcomes people of all ages and talents, introducing them to different mediums and techniques and watching them get excited about art. At Just Be Original, Boyd along with DC alum Denise Pannell '95 offers a variety of classes in art, theater and music. She is active outside the studio, taking classes to various locations and participating in community events and festivals.

"I absolutely love the people I get to work with," says Boyd, who recently moved her studio into a new ground-floor location on Defiance's main retail street. "I love being able to bring out talents in them that they themselves didn't know they had. I love bringing smiles and laughter to people who may be struggling from a long week at work, and help them to forget their problems for a few hours."

She also gets great joy from working with senior citizens and persons with special needs. She often visits Glenn Park, a local retirement community, where she works with residents. "It brings so much joy to their day and even more to mine!"

Boyd works with the Bryan Center for Autism and Good Samaritan School, helping students and adults who previously may not have had opportunities to work and experiment with various forms of art. "I love watching them grow," she says.

Boyd was an art and music teacher for 14 years after graduating from Defiance College. The daughter of teachers, she fell naturally into the role of educator. But, she grew

frustrated by schools withdrawing from the arts to put more time and attention into other areas. "I believe K-8 should be exploring and creating and students finding their interests in art and music; not doing homework and testing constantly," she says. Thus, when her teaching position was eliminated, Boyd turned it into an opportunity to open her own business and create a new avenue for children and adults to experience art.

Choosing Defiance College for her undergraduate education wasn't a difficult decision for Boyd. She attended Fairview High School, and her parents, Myron and Sandy Bok, were both teaching in the Defiance City Schools. Sandy Bok was a DC alumna. Boyd knew she wanted to stay close to home. As a member of 4-H with a long list of service involvement, she received DC's Presidential Service Leader scholarship. "My dad felt like we had won the lottery," she laughs.

Though they wouldn't know it at the time, the decision to attend DC was a blessing for Boyd when her mother fell ill with leukemia. Being on a nearby campus allowed her to spend more time at home before her mother's passing.

The service learning that Boyd became immersed in at DC would play a big role in shaping her future. "I view my entire business as a service to bettering our community," she says, noting that she has teamed up with Keller Trucking for the past six years on the soles4souls project.

Her Defiance College education was also enriched with many of the people who became her mentors. "Dr. Richard Stroede saw something in me that I am quite certain I didn't even see in myself!" she recalls. "When I went to him to discuss my major in art, I had no idea what to expect. I explained how much I loved the college, but I was lost without music. He decided ... why not create a self-directed major in fine arts – art, theater

Amazing COLOR



and music - for me." Dr. Stroede and Carolyn Small personally taught many of her classes, and he designed hands-on experiences with participation in a church choir and the Fort Defiance Players.

"I cannot express how much I wish he were here so I could personally thank him."

President Jim Harris and his family also made a huge impact on her life. Boyd was selected as President for a Day, switching places with Dr. Harris for one day. "They sent me a huge bouquet of flowers. I got to welcome my own mom at a science dinner, while he was at piano lessons! ... They were always encouraging me, even after college."

Coupling these opportunities with art classes taught by Valerie Kramer and Steve Smith gave Boyd the rich college experience that she had hoped to receive.

It seems that Boyd is now doing what she was meant to do, sharing her love of the arts while providing a great service to the community. She never imagined that she would own her own business, but it not only fulfills her personal calling but provides a space where people of all ages and talents can create in a relaxed atmosphere.

As a wife and mother, her days are very busy, and she sometimes stretches herself thin. But, she says, "It's so hard to say no to doing something you absolutely love and adore!"

INTRIGUED BY THE OPPORTUNITIES

By Kathy Punches '96, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Several years ago, two Defiance College alums saw an opportunity to become partners in a business venture. Mike Moorman '04 and Trent Boeckman '03 have been co-owners of McSober's Saloon, a sports bar and entertainment venue in Coldwater, Ohio, for the past decade.

"I don't think either of us thought we would end up owning a sports bar," said Moorman. "We were intrigued by the opportunities that it might bring."

McSober's features live bands and a popular sports bar menu highlighted by wings, pizza and burgers. They try to offer

something for a wide range of clientele – from Senior Citizen Fried Chicken Night on Thursdays to weekends focusing on live bands for the younger crowd. They bring in bands from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton and Indianapolis, as well as the best local talent.

Moorman and Boeckman became friends at DC where both were members of the baseball team. Moorman, of Coldwater, played two years of junior college baseball before arriving at Defiance. Boeckman came to DC to play baseball and football, though an injury cut short his football career.



Mike Moorman (left) and Trent Boeckman (right) with Alisha Robbins. McSober's Saloon held a benefit for Alisha, who is battling cancer.

Defiance College social work students Pay It Forward



“I think Defiance College helped us in dealing with people. Our business is very much about dealing with people, being able to relate,” said Moorman. “We both think outside the box, and that is one of the main reasons we have a very successful place.”

He credits former athletic director Dick Kaiser and former baseball coach Craig Rutter as individuals who provided much support and guidance during their college years. “They were always there for guidance in any way. They acted as father figures away from home,” he recalled. “Both are great people that I stay in touch with to this day. They always pushed us to be better on and off the playing field, and to not be satisfied with what you did today but to improve and get better if you are granted a tomorrow.”

Moorman and Boeckman said their fondest DC memories are of baseball and the people. “We loved competing with our team,” said Moorman. “We also loved the connection we had with the whole campus.”

They have tried to incorporate DC-inspired values into their professional lives, getting involved in their community by hosting benefits, supporting food drives, and helping area youth. McSober’s has raised more than \$150,000 for various benefits since the duo took over.

A “Wing It” program, now in its sixth year, connects with area elementary schools by supplying teachers with cards redeemable for wings, fries and a drink that can be awarded to students who demonstrate improvement in an area.

“We love the people who make our business possible, and we are always there for people who need a helping hand.”

Mike Moorman ’04

“All in all, it’s great to own a business with a great friend, and to watch how it grows and becomes successful,” said Moorman. “We love the people who make our business possible, and we are always there for people who need a helping hand. That, we feel, is the biggest blessing, having a successful business that is able to help others. “

Boeckman grew up in nearby St. Henry, Ohio. After graduating from DC, he moved to Columbus for a brief stint. He and his wife, Molly, returned to St. Henry where they reside with their three children, Hayden, Tate and Cam.

Moorman grew up in Coldwater. He attended Sinclair Community College before transferring to DC. After graduating, he married DC alum Jayme Zehringer. They live in Coldwater with their two sons, Maddox and Madsen.

Students from Defiance College’s Social Work Macro Practice with Communities and Organizations class conducted their annual Pay It Forward initiative during the fall semester. The course, taught by Professor Alesia Yakos-Brown, directly impacts community needs by awarding financial assistance. This year, the class awarded a \$2,000 grant to Project Respect of Northwest Ohio.

Since 2008, the DC class has awarded more than \$17,000 to address needs of transportation, hunger, unemployment, poverty, youth mentorship and cultural understanding in northwest Ohio. With steps embedded in the curriculum, students conduct a five-county community assessment, prepare a request for grant proposals, send RFPs to approximately 50 non-profit social service agencies, and award grants to applicants that best address the identified community need.

The project began in 2008 with funding through the Pay It Forward student-led philanthropy program led by Ohio and Kentucky Campus Compacts, and later with the support of the Women’s Giving Circle of Defiance. In recent years, the class has raised its own funds through a number of events such as raffles, bake sales, and donation solicitation. This year, a portion of the funds was raised with support from Buffalo Wild Wings which donated a percentage of one-day dining sales. The class also held a series of bake sales during local Knights of Columbus fish fry events, and at General Motors during breaks and lunch.

In addition to the grant awarded to Project Respect, the class also awarded \$200 to Children’s Lantern.

Defiance College receives *U.S. News* ranking **IN TOP TIER** of Midwest liberal arts colleges



Defiance College is once again listed among the top tier of liberal arts colleges in the Midwest in the 2017 edition of *U.S. News and World Report's Best Colleges*. Defiance's designation in the category of Midwest Regional Liberal Arts Colleges is three spots higher than last year's ranking, moving to 38th.

"We are pleased to see Defiance College moving up in the ranks of some very good colleges," said DC president Dr. Richanne C. Mankey.

"At Defiance, we believe in the liberal arts as an important underpinning for education. As we continue to strengthen and develop distinctive programs, we will also have an eye on regional and national needs as well as on employability. And, we know that our mission rooted in service to others resonates well in a world so in need of what a Defiance College education delivers."

Schools in the Regional Liberal Arts designation mainly focus on the undergraduate experience and offer a broad range of programs in the liberal arts and in fields such as business, nursing and education. A total of 334 colleges comprise North, South, West and Midwest regions. The Midwest region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Rankings are based on a formula including several indicators of quality such as student/faculty ratio, student selectivity, student retention, financial resources, and alumni giving. *U.S. News and World Report* publishes the rankings as a tool for prospective students and parents in their college search process.

Once again demonstrating the direct positive impact that can be made in communities around the globe, Defiance College's McMaster School for Advancing Humanity is working with partners locally and in Belize to increase the frequency and quality of eye care to rural populations in the Central American country.

Earlier this summer, Defiance College representatives delivered a retinal camera apparatus and desk to the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI). The equipment was donated by ProMedica.

McMaster School dean Mary Ann Studer led discussions with ProMedica officials and representatives of BCVI to facilitate transfer of the equipment to Belize. Donations were secured from Defiance Lions and Defiance Rotary to cover cost of shipping.

This July, Studer and McMaster School administrative assistant Rena Rager traveled to Belize to deliver the camera and laptop computer to complete the retinal camera set-up. The primary purpose of the equipment will be screening for diabetic retinopathy, which is the third leading cause of blindness in the country.

The BCVI instituted a national screening and treatment project for diabetic retinopathy in 2014 with partial funding by the Lions Club International Foundation. The program is now expanding with support from The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in the UK.

Donation and delivery of the equipment also provided opportunities for Studer to talk with BCVI representatives about other partnerships. During their annual trip to Belize later this year, Defiance College students who have been accepted as McMaster Scholars will be trained to do vision screenings that they will conduct in schools and communities during their stay.

Studer said students are excited about not only their individual projects that they will be conducting, but also the overall team effort to conduct vision screenings.

"The McMaster School is most effective when it is a clear match of resources and skills with the challenges that communities face," said Studer. "In