

Partners convert their 'primitive' passion from hobby to unique shopping experience

Over the course of two years friends and Sisters in Law Gail and Paula Bulger began experimenting, creating unique home décor and furniture items, soon offering them at Island Craft fairs and special events. The response was so positive that the pair soon found themselves receiving phone calls and emails requesting additional products. The pair discovered they truly enjoyed creating distinctive products and interacting with people. So in the spring of 2010, they decided to take what they learned as a hobby which effectively served as a test market, and launch their partnership "Simply Primitive".

During the pre-launch phase Paula continued to work full time in health care while Gail, who worked casually on contract, decided to approach Resources West in Alberton to apply to the Skills PEI Self Employ PEI program. The Self-Employ PEI program provides individuals with start-up counseling, access to tools and resources, business training and financial support for up to 52 weeks. The pair both completed the Resources West Small Business Program (SBP) which is a series of workshops introducing entrepreneurs to essential business skills. Gail shares "this program is a wonderful tool for any-



one going into business; I would attend it again this winter when things slow down." For more information on the Self Employ PEI program contact your local Skills PEI office or Resources West Inc. at 853-4555, online at www.resourceswest.pe.ca or email dgamble@resourceswest.pe.ca.

Upon completion of a business plan and securing financing Paula and Gail spent most of May and June negotiating a lease, producing inventory and preparing their shop for opening day on July 1st. Their cozy country shop located on the boardwalk in front of the Mill River Fun Park offers distinctive home decor, lighting, rustic homemade furniture and gift items, "We are so appreciative of the support we are receiving from people from West Prince and across the Island. It has been all so positive."

To date business has exceeded expectations with the duo actively marketing through a Facebook group with over 1500 members. Private shopping parties have also been a hit with 3 evening parties a week booked from now until December. Simply Primitive's newest promotion is their VIP card. Shoppers who make 6 purchases of over \$30 are entitled to receive 20% off their next purchase.

The owners are also partnering with another local business "Antrim Sisters", to jointly host a fall, Christmas & Home Décor Demonstration Show on October 18th at St. Anthony's Hall, Bloomfield.

The business is also contributing back to the community using the fall show to launch a drive in support of the West Prince Caring Cupboard encouraging shoppers to bring non perishable food items to the show and later to the store for chances to win prizes and discounts. For more information on the drive drop by the store during business hours: 10-5 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. 10-8 on Fridays and 1-5 Sunday afternoon.

During Small Business Week, Oct.17-23, take time to acknowledge and support local small businesses like Simply Primitive which form the foundation of our economy, creating jobs and making Western PEI a great place to live and shop.



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