



Calvert County NEWS

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Small Business Development Center Helps That Pottery Place Develop a Make-Your-Own Business in Huntingtown, Md.

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – November 19, 2009 – That Pottery Place in Huntingtown, Md., offers children and adults the opportunity to create one-of-a-kind masterpieces in ceramic and glass in a fun, relaxed setting. Enthusiasts of all ages and abilities can paint mugs, banks, platters, ornaments, trinkets, plates, pots and pitchers and lots of sports-themed items. Once decorated, the items are fired and finished by staff and are available for pickup by customers in about a week.

Since purchasing the business in spring 2009, Anna Pessagno has worked with the Small Business Development Center and received no-cost and confidential assistance developing a business plan, creating a unique marketing approach for her business and implementing social marketing initiatives. “The SBDC has been extremely helpful in getting my business on the right track,” says Pessagno. “I have the passion and creativity needed for the business, but the SBDC has helped with some of the more difficult and technical aspects of business management. The fact that its services are provided at no charge makes it one of the best bargains I’ve come across.”

The Maryland SBDC Program is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the agency has been in Southern Maryland for more than 20 years. Counselors provide a variety of confidential, no-cost business counseling services including business and marketing plan development, loan packaging, financial analysis, strategic planning and growth management strategies. According to the SBDC, there are four building blocks of business success: sound management practices, industry experience, technical support and the ability to plan effectively.

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It is those building blocks that Pessagno has been working on diligently since May with her SBDC counselors. “It takes a lot of effort to maintain a fresh and dynamic business plan,” says Pessagno. “I’ve worked with counselors at the SBDC since I purchased this business and they have been a very helpful resource for me. It is particularly useful to bounce marketing ideas off someone who has experience working with a variety of businesses. While I also provide birthday parties, pottery workshops for adults and special needs children and can even prepare premade items for those who don’t want to decorate their own items, those are standard services that most pottery studios around the country offer. The SBDC has helped me create and implement more creative ways to appeal to a wider range of customers and in the long run that is what helps set my shop apart from others.”

Some of the ideas that Pessagno has developed include:

- First Friday Family Nights, which take place the first Friday of each month from 6 to 9 p.m. and include 15-percent discounts on merchandise and free pizza for the whole family.
- Read and Paint parties on the first Monday of each month for preschoolers where a theme is taken from a popular, age-appropriate book and then coordinated with a ceramic item that the children decorate.
- Ladies Night on the third Saturday of each month from 6 to 9 p.m. which includes free appetizers, bring-your-own wine and beer and merchandise discounts for women only where customers can linger while personalizing their pottery in an enjoyable setting.

“I’m always looking for new ways to introduce people to the fun of making unique pottery creations,” Pessagno says. “It’s a great way to spend a few hours, whether with your whole family, your girlfriends or just a morning or afternoon with mom and the kids. The SBDC continues to help me find and develop those little niches that create new audiences of pottery lovers.”

For more information on That Pottery Place, call 410.257.7707, visit online at <http://thatpotteryplace.yolasite.com/> or find them on Facebook. The studio is located at 5 Oxford Way in Huntingtown, Md., on the southbound side of Route 4. Hours are Monday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday 12 to 5 p.m. (closed on Tuesday).

For more information on the Small Business Development Center, visit online at www.sbdchelp.com or call the Prince Frederick office on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 410.535.4583.

For more information about the Calvert County, Md., Department of Economic Development, our visitor sites and attractions and the services available to assist County businesses, call 410.535.4583, 800.331.9771 or 301.855.1880; send an e-mail to info@ecalvert.com; or visit online at www.ecalvert.com.

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Calvert County is Maryland’s smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to approximately 90,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. There are more than 5,000 businesses in the County and a labor force of at least 1.8 million resides within a one-hour drive. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, utilities, light manufacturing and administrative services.