

The Sun Chronicle, November 2007

Enthusiasm “In The Bag” For This Local Business

If enthusiasm is what’s needed to guarantee success for a new business, Mikala Cash has got it in the bag. The 28-year-old North Attleboro native has cashed in on her love of fabrics and sewing by creating a thriving handbag business.

It’s tough to sew and make a living out of it,” Cash said. “At first I wasn’t sure if I was going to make cloths or handbags. But they say that women love bags and shoes, so I knew there would always be a demand there.

“I realized that every woman needs a bag when they leave the house – whether it’s a beach tote or handbag.” Cash’s designs include colorful handbags, totes and diaper bags in a variety of fabrics. “My signature look is combining different fabrics,” she said. “I really like using upholstery fabrics and combining them with different materials and textiles with bright rich and diverse colors. I’ve always been a very tactile person – if it’s soft, I have to touch it. Fabrics like cut corduroy and velour not only feel good, but are visually pleasing.”

In addition to designing her own handbags, which are limited editions, Cash also offers women the opportunity to design their own by picking a specific style and fabric from her Web site. “I really try to listen to the customer. A big element of the business is making something that’s unique,” she said.

While Cash only began working full-time at making handbags a little over a year ago, the business was a long time in the making. It all started with a green swatch of fabric that Cash sewed into a cotton ball pillow at age 5, under the watchful eye of her grandmother. “I’ve always sewn. My grandmother taught me the basics,” she said. “I can still remember sitting on the kitchen floor and sewing that pillow. As I got older, I grew more passionate about it. In high school, I was making my own cloths and bags.”

After earning degrees in English and Psychology from Rhode Island College, Cash decided to turn her sewing hobby into a business. She enrolled in the fashion program at the Massachusetts College of Art to start. Making money while doing something she loves is one of the perks of the job, Cash said. “It’s definitely fun, but it’s also hard work to start your own business,” she said. “I wake up in the morning and say, “Yay, I get to go play today.” It’s been a crazy and fun journey.”