

CELEBRATING SUCCESS



Ladies of Liberty Mercantile

Diane Bishop

130 C Street, Independence, OR

Started January 2009

www.ladiesoflibertysewing.com

“Fabric and Notions”

Ladies of Liberty Mercantile is a gathering place to hone your quilting and sewing skills, to learn the history of the craft, and to connect with like-minded people. Owner Diane Bishop makes a point of learning all the first names of her customers. The shop is especially inclusive and welcoming to new quilters who can learn the ropes at Diane’s series of introductory classes in quilting and sewing.

Ladies of Liberty Mercantile specializes in reproductions of nineteenth century fabric. At block of the month club meetings, participants complete a quilt and learn about a historical period. One club focuses on Civil War history. Another class learns about the controversial history of quilts in the Underground Railroad.. A third group, the Little Women’s Club, uses historical reproduction fabric designed by Jo Morton to make five miniature quilts. A new workshop this month will teach participants how to build Heirloom Dolls.

Diane feels most gratified in her business by **“working with people that are really nice. One of my customers told me that I was a blessing to her. To me that’s success.”** Regular customers share stories about their lives and ask Diane about her family. She explains, **“In this business, customers want to know you, care about you, be a part of your life in a way that they don’t with other businesses. I have struggled with finding a balance between being social with customers and getting work done in the shop. I talk too much!”**

History:

Prior to opening her store, Diane worked as the event coordinator at the Linn County Fair in Albany for many years. Her interest in Civil war era fabrics was inspired by doing re-enactments with her family. She had always enjoyed sewing and creating costumes, so she began learning about and collecting the fabrics and creating the dresses for the reenactments, which she displays in the window of the shop.

Partnership with MERIT:

Diane had always dreamed of opening up a fabric and quilting store with a close friend. When her friend moved and opened a shop in La Pine, Oregon, Diane was inspired to take the leap. When she heard about MERIT it seemed **“that might be just what I need. I already knew how to sew and knew how to work with people. What I didn’t know was how to apply for financing, how to keep my books, how to run a business.”**

Diane completed the MERIT class in the fall of 2008. Says Diane, **“The MERIT class was my first time telling my dream to someone other than my closest friends. And I started to think; maybe this is really going to happen.”** Next month she will be celebrating the one year anniversary of her grand opening. She loves being an entrepreneur because, **“I love being able to make my own decisions. I look forward to being here everyday.”**



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MERIT is a Collaboration of:

Catholic Community Services
Polk Community Development Corporation
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