



SMALL BUSINESS Spotlights

BY Linda Margison / PHOTOGRAPHY BY Martin Boling



(l-r) Amanda Hyde and Kelly Jennings. Photo by Robert Forgas

MIRTH

Amanda Hyde & Kelly Jennings, Co-Owners

Since opening, MIRTH owners Amanda Hyde and Kelly Jennings have been diligently focused on serving their customers in meaningful ways, while also supporting small businesses that make the downtown Square a vibrant necessity in the community. That's never been more important than in the midst of a global pandemic.

To help support other small businesses, MIRTH is cross-promoting with local restaurants and eateries in lieu of holiday events where refreshments are served, which means Hyde and Jennings can continue to provide an

exciting shopping experience despite safety restrictions. "Staying creative and working together is important for all of us to survive—the character of Bloomington depends on it," says Jennings. "This encourages shoppers to come downtown and support the community in a fun way."

Along with their website, Jennings and Hyde have recently started doing virtual store tours on social media highlighting new arrivals. Customers can then order online, call, or message to have favored items set aside, or browse items in-store. For those seeking a more private experience, MIRTH offers the opportunity to shop outside normal business hours, either alone or with family or girlfriends. Hyde says, "We take a lot of pride in the experience customers have when they're here."

Visit mirthmarket.com or follow Mirth Market on Facebook and Instagram.



Bill Brown.

Griffy Creek Studio

Bill Brown, Architect/Owner

Griffy Creek Studio's Bill Brown knew in high school that he wanted to be an architect, but his guidance counselor talked him out of it—even though he had already designed and built a three-story treehouse with retractable ladder. So, Brown went to college and learned about ecology, became a biology teacher and coach, and eventually stepped into his family's three-generation lumber and hardware business.

"That whole time, I kept thinking, I really want to be an architect," Brown says. Finally, he did it. In 1993, at age 40, he graduated first in his class at the Ball State University College of Architecture

and Planning and built a career on affordable, energy-positive, disaster-resistant architectural design for residential, commercial, and institutional clients. "The construction in my background, building supplies, lumber, and biology—which is the basis for sustainable design—has all been important," he says. "The concept of sustainability has always fascinated me. When I was studying ecology, something clicked and I wanted to be part of the solution, not the problem."

Nationally recognized for his design work and leadership, Brown shares his knowledge with future generations as a graduate instructor for Indiana University, and he's proud to be a father and grandfather, who works with amazing clients. "I design with clients, not for them," he says. Learn more at griffycreek.studio.

Up With the Sun Wellness

Tobie Hall, Owner

A certified health and wellness coach with 30 years' experience working with the body, Tobie Hall learned at an early age that the food she put in her body determined her wellness. It's a lesson she gained from her mother, who was deeply holistic, but also one that gained momentum when she attended Alexandria School of Massage Therapy and Nutrition in the 1990s.

"Although I have been a movement advocate my entire life and eat fairly consciously, my holistic approach to health became more serious while at the school," she says.

At Up With the Sun Wellness, cleverly named because she's always been an early riser, Hall teaches others the same principles she has lived—eating organic whole foods—to ward off disease. "I'm a living organism that needs living food," she says, explaining that organic whole foods have a high vibration, unlike processed foods, and can heal and prevent diabetes, heart disease, autoimmune diseases, cancer, and acne, as well as balance hormones, reduce weight, and give the body abundant energy. "When you feel good, you have an amazing vitality, lower rates of anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, and a lifestyle you are proud of. The body is meant to heal itself. It's not about losing weight."

Hall coaches clients to better understand emotional eating habits and unhealthy patterns that do not serve them.

She teaches them about macronutrients, supplements, minerals, vitamins, and better nutrition. This includes giving menu ideas, cleaning out her clients' refrigerators and pantries, choosing essential pantry staples and kitchen tools, and teaching clients how to read labels and shop at the grocery store. She'll even grocery shop for them and do in-home meal preparations, private cooking, and parties.

"I am my clients' biggest cheerleader and advocate without judgment," she says. "I support their ideas and together we can come up with a plan to help them discover solutions."

Hall strongly believes that committing to a lifestyle of eating living foods can have a

dramatic effect on how a person feels and heals. "Being open to creative solutions and altering limiting beliefs about food will only serve you, creating a good-feeling vibration and healing energy within," she says. "Movement, as well, is an integral part of your well-being. I believe a daily practice of meditation, yoga, Pilates, or any form of physical exercise is necessary to keep a body in motion."

Hall works both with individuals and groups in sessions that can last from one to six months. For more information, visit upwiththesunwellness.com or search Up With the Sun Wellness on Facebook and Instagram.



Tobie Hall.



Dave Debikey.

Global Gifts

Dave Debikey, Manager

After being closed for 2 1/2 months because of the pandemic, the fair-trade nonprofit Global Gifts reopened in May with precautions to keep its staff, volunteers, and customers safe. Those safeguards—admitting only eight people at a time, sanitizing surfaces throughout the day, and not touching customers' items—are still in place, but potentially jeopardize the livelihoods of 300 artisan groups in 40 countries.

"There are communities that rely on us to market and sell their products—what we do here provides important income for families," manager Dave Debikey says,

adding that the store's limited capacity means less product gets sold. "The pandemic has impacted us, but it's even harder for communities we work with around the globe. We have limited funding to provide the extra support they need at this time. That's a bigger picture."

In normal years, the shop would pack 50 people at a time during the holidays, which account for about a third of its business each year. "We're encouraging people to shop online on our website for curbside pickup, because that's going to be the only way we can actually manage to do the sales we need to do with only eight people admitted," Debikey says, adding that customers can order or make direct donations of support at globalgiftsft.com.