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New business ties together lifestyle choices with talents

by Stella Shepard

Self Employment



Rhonda Gallant is an entrepreneur and a mother of three children. Her business ventures have always suited the needs of her family and her interests and talents.

Her journey

“I started out trying to increase my personal fitness to lose weight,” says Rhonda. “I found activities that I really enjoyed and were fun. I became stronger, lost weight, and had more energy. I added good nutrition and realistic eating to my personal fitness program. It was then I realized that a combination of fitness training and healthy eating was something that I wanted to do for a living.

“In 1996, I started **Pinkie’s Bakery** as a home-based business. The business allowed me to earn an income and stay at home with my children. It was a successful business that I operated for 10 years.

“My parents **Doug and Marg Fraser** have opened **Pink’s Pizza and Bakery** on Main Street in Souris. My new business is directly across the street from my parents’ business. We now enjoy complementing each other’s line of work.”

Community resources

Rhonda was eligible for the **Self Employ PEI** program administered through **SkillsPEI**, a division of the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning. The program assists individuals by providing financial support, business training and counselling during the development of their business plan.

“The program has made it possible for me to start a small business and be self employed,” says Rhonda. “I am very pleased with the local support and encouragement.

“As well, I used the **Cooperative Education** program to hire a high school student to work with me for two hours a day. She is learning about the food industry while on the job. It’s worked out great and I plan to hire her for the summer months.”

Staff needed

“I will be hiring a full-time assistant,” says Rhonda. “I will also be hiring three or four part-time students for the summer. Throughout the year, I will continue to hire food servers as needed.

“My oldest daughter works with me after school and on weekends. I grew up working in the food and hospitality industry. It’s very important for me to teach the value of working and earning money to my children.”

Rhonda Gallant is the owner of **Evergreen Café & Wellness Studio** in Souris. The new business promotes and reflects her healthy lifestyle. Rhonda has been a fitness instructor, a natural nutritionist and a weight loss guide for about seven years. She is passionate about maintaining a healthy lifestyle by example.

“This new business ties together all of the past services I have offered with a quick and easy way to eat healthy,” says Rhonda.

“The Café offers a variety of healthy snacks and light meals. We also carry a line of nutritional supplements. I have studied the benefits of nutritional supplements and have enjoyed great results myself. As there is no place in my community selling these types of natural food supplements and vitamins, I wanted to make them more accessible to my clients.”

“The Wellness Studio side of the business offers dance and fitness classes as well as weight loss and wellness programs for adults, teens and children.

“As well, I provide personal training, meal planning, and stress management programs.”

For more information about **Evergreen Café & Wellness Studio**, contact **Rhonda Gallant** at 743-3330.

For more information about **Active Communities Inc.**, call toll free 1-800-953-4030.

