



Success Story The Windamere Event Venue and Art Gallery



Middletown, Ohio



For 20 years, Mica Glaser overworked herself time and time again. She was passionate about her work, but tired of not being valued at her job. As many people say, but little actually do – she decided to start her own business. With years of experience in event planning, marketing and sales, she started scouting venue locations. “I knew I wanted a building with history and character,” said Mica. “And when I stepped into the Ogelsby-Barnitz Bank, it was love at first sight. I knew this was it.”

As she began the process of starting her business, there were several road blocks involved. “We had to submit two business plans to the bank and federal government, one for The Windamere and the other for Toast of the Town; our event planning company,” said Mica. At this moment, she knew she needed additional help and was recommended to the Butler County Small Business Development Center (SBDC). “We worked together to develop a business plan and to re-structure her business,” said David Riggs, Director at the Butler County SBDC. By working with the SBDC, Mica and her business partners were able to secure a \$365,000 purchase and renovation loan from Key Bank and the Small Business Administration (SBA). Four months later, they completed renovations, hired four independent contractors and opened their doors in October of 2015.

Once known as the first operating bank in Butler County, the building is now called the Windamere Event Venue & Art Gallery. Mica manages the business as co-owner with her fiancé, Theron Jones along with wildlife artist Christopher Walden. They offer event space for social, corporate and private events along with wedding planning services and more. “I think we definitely helped fill a void in Middletown,” said Mica. “After the Manchester Inn & Conference Center closed there was a shortage of unique venues in the area.” To date, the Windamere expects to host 65 events generating \$150,000 in new sales by the end of this year. “By starting this business, we have the opportunity to support more Ohio small businesses,” said Mica. “Our hope is to get more people to visit us in downtown Middletown.”

For more information about Ohio Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) programs and resources, visit: www.sbdc.development.ohio.gov

