

Hobby doing stain glass turns into a new business

What started as a hobby for stained glass artist Suzanne Larkin has now turned into a business venture, Larkin's Stained Glass, which she runs out of her home on Stouffville's Main Street East.

"I started to do it eight years ago when my children were babies and I enjoyed it as a hobby," she said in an interview. "About three years ago, I started doing craft shows and that's when I began to sell my work."

She has always had an artistic nature, observes Suzanne, and also enjoys drawing and painting. "I love glass. You touch it and it's cold and hard, but it has a feel to it."

Suzanne's work has appeared at various shows and locations, including the Toronto Outdoor

Art Show, Markham Festival, the Burlington Cultural Centre and, most recently, the Country Decorating and Collectibles Show, held last weekend at Markham Fairgrounds.

She and her family moved to Stouffville from Toronto just over a year ago and she's been open for business since October.

People are welcome to drop in, she says, or they can call for an appointment. She's closed on Sundays and Mondays, "but if someone came to the door and I was here, that would be fine."

The move to Stouffville has given her more space to work, which she believes is essential to do a professional job. She creates everything from lamps and ornaments to custom-made stained glass windows, and much of her

business comes through word of mouth. "I did advertise before Christmas and quite a few people came in. That got me started."

She can work from a customer's design, copy something they like, or create something for them herself.

"Some people who come to me know what they want," she says, "others really don't know and I have books they can look at and pick things out from."

If customers want her advice about designing a window, she's happy to visit local homes and discuss what would fit in best with the surrounding decor. A bathroom window designed by Suzanne will be featured in an upcoming copy of Select Homes Magazine.

She estimates it will take about two years to become established in Stouffville, and feels very fortunate to have a job which gives her both personal satisfaction and the freedom to accommodate her family life.

Her husband Chris, who works shifts as a firefighter, has been very supportive and he and other family members get involved in lending a helping hand when she's involved in a show.

Larkin's Stained Glass is located at 144 Main Street East. Appointments can be made by calling 640-2298.



Photo/KATE GILDERDALE

Suzanne Larkin decided to take the big plunge last fall and open her own business producing stained glass objects. Since then she's been busy filling orders for her fledgling enterprise.

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