

BEAD, BUTTON, emBELLISH

ballroom and belly dancers shop for beads to add finishing touches to their garments. It seems the list of possibilities is almost endless.

Cindy Spiess-Malmstrom knew nothing about beads when she handed over the check to buy The Bead Shop 14 years ago. She didn't even know how to run the cash register. Thanks to employees, customers and suppliers, she learned – fast. And, today she is considered to be one of the bead experts in Kalamazoo. Cindy loves the Westnedge Avenue location. So much, in fact, she bought the building in March and made structural improvements that were recently celebrated at a grand re-opening.



Cindy's daughter, Alaina, grew up around the shop. She tried to avoid coming in, however, saying that she wanted to do fun stuff, while her mother always wanted her to work. Her work is official now. Armed with her bachelor's degree from WMU, she became the shop's manager about one year ago.

The walls of the Westnedge Avenue shop are lined with Czech glass, Swarovski crystals, semi-precious stones, charms and beads, beads, beads. Customers will also find crafting materials and jewelry-making supplies.

Both Cindy and Alaina feel that owning The Bead Shop sparked a creative side neither knew they had. They want to ignite creativity in others. Both teach classes in basic stringing and basic wire, jewelry repair, and woven pieces. Classes are offered upon request. Make a simple call to the shop to schedule one for yourself or your group.

Alaina has a talent for design; she's created jewelry for several weddings this summer. She will also help beaders create their own unique designs and help them become reality.

A sewer previously unexposed to beading has to wonder how those beautiful beads can be put to creative use in the sewing room. Garment makers use beads as buttons and to embellish dresses, jackets, and veils. Quilters embellish their heirloom wall hangings with charms and beads. Home dec sewers use them on lamp shades, fan pulls, curtain tie backs, and of course, pillows. Skaters, costume designers,

Cindy speaks with high praise for the talent of Kalamazoo's ASG members. She also speaks with respect for the chapter's commitment to community service. She worked with members last year, providing supplies and helping assemble key chains for the "I Know I Can"

project, a college-awareness program in partnership with the Kalamazoo Public Schools. Our ASG members also know that Cindy has generously provided door prizes and gift certificates for many of our meetings and special events. In addition, she offers us a 10% discount on all purchases.

When asked what plans they have for The Bead Shop's future, Alaina said they hope to invite beaders to join them for open-beading night...an opportunity to just hang out and bead. She added, "Nothing's cast in stone yet." However, I don't think she was stringing me along.

Expanded hours may also be in the future. Cindy and Alaina occasionally arrive to customers waiting in the parking lot, many from out of town.

If you've not been to The Bead Shop recently, make it a destination. You'll feel the potential of beads tug at your creativity and see new possibilities for our craft. Visit Cindy and Alaina at

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www.thebeadshop.biz

Hours

Mon-Sat 11-7

Sun 12-5