

## Chantal's Homemade Creative Crafts

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On a sunny day last summer, Chantal Lussier welcomed me to her house in Winnipeg where she lives and operates her business, *Chantal's Homemade Creative Crafts*. She greeted me with a beautiful smile, funny jokes, and a laughter that was truly contagious. We entered the sunroom to discuss Chantal's business and crafts. The room was bright, colourful, and filled with a variety of different arts and crafts that she created.

Chantal explained to me that she started her business in 2019 and that the first order she received was from her best friend who was getting married. Her friend asked her to create centerpieces for the wedding. Chantal painted and decorated twenty beautiful blue bottles for this event which marked a wonderful beginning for *Chantal's Homemade Creative Crafts*.

Chantal is very passionate about her art projects. She spends at least two hours every single day working on her products which include colourful bath salts in glass jars, painted and decorated bottles with unique designs, paintings, and mugs with swirls of colour made from a mixture of nail polish and water. To make her bath salts, Chantal dyes Epsom salts with food colouring and layers the salts creating vibrant designs. When asked where she gets her crafting ideas from, Chantal told me that she gets a lot of her inspiration from products and techniques she sees on Pinterest.

Chantal's artwork provides an important outlet for her feelings. One of her many creations is a glass bottle that she decorated in memory of her grandfather who recently passed away. The bottle is adorned with photos of her grandfather and an image of the word "love" in American Sign Language. Chantal also uses her art to express her concern for the people affected by the war in the Ukraine. She showed me a canvas that she painted in the Ukrainian national colours – blue and yellow - as a sign of her solidarity with the Ukrainian people. She has a very compassionate soul which her art expresses so beautifully.

During the long weekends in the summer, Chantal participates in the Oak Lake Craft Market where she sells her products. The day that I met her, she was preparing to leave for this market. She was very excited at the prospect of visiting with family, friends, and fellow crafters and sharing her creations with the public. Chantal said that the bath salts are her best-selling item at the market, especially amongst kids who seem to be attracted to the bright colours of the salts.

While Chantal is very grateful to have opportunities to sell her products, she also recognizes the importance of philanthropy. She generously donates her creations to help support different causes and events. For instance, she donated a gift basket of mugs decorated with nail polish to the ICOF Spring Fling and some jars of bath salts toward a prize basket for LIFE's Summer Contest. Chantal also frequently donates her products to events in support of people with Cerebral Palsy.

I asked Chantal if she had any advice for people who would like to start their own businesses. She told me that hard work and patience are the most important qualities that an entrepreneur should have. From my visit with her, it is obvious that Chantal exhibits these qualities. Her dedication to art and her patience are evident in her products on every level. Chantal is a wonderful person who brings light and colour to this world through her arts and crafts.