

womanink

Winter 2020/2021





NAWBO
BUFFALO NIAGARA
National Association of Women Business Owners

2020/2021 EVENTS

Subject to change

Upcoming Monthly Meetings

January 13, 2021
February 10, 2021
March 10, 2021
April 14, 2021
May 12, 2021
June 9, 2021 (NAWBO Annual Installation)

NAWBO Saturday Brunch

The chapter will be hosting a virtual networking brunch the first Saturday each month! Please join us anytime for as long as you are able. Add these dates to your calendar.

Time: 9:00 AM
January 2, 2021
February 6, 2021
March 6, 2021
April 3, 2021
May 1, 2021
June 5, 2021

Monday Morning Coffee Talk

Time: 8:00 AM • Every week on Mondays
December 14, 2020
December 21, 2020
December 28, 2020

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara is the premier organization for women business owners who aspire to accomplish growth, education, and connections.

NAWBO

The National Association of Women Business Owners propels women entrepreneurs into economic, social, and political spheres of power worldwide by:

- Strengthening the wealth creating capacity of our members and promoting economic development within the entrepreneurial community
- Creating innovative and effective changes in the business culture
- Building strategic alliances, coalitions, and affiliations
- Transforming public policy and influencing opinion makers

We are looking at new ways to keep our members connected in this increasingly distant world. If you would like to receive text message updates about meetings and events, please contact info@nawbowny.org with your mobile number.



Helping businesses thrive is important.

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Message from the President



Paula D'Amico

Brave Enough

The power of words during these unprecedented times can help raise you up, knock you down, or bring you closer together. In 2020, chances are, you have experienced all three.

This has been a year like no other. It has been a year of change, evolution, and for some, revolution.

How many times, over the past nine months or more, have you been told to be brave, have courage, and stand strong.

Wouldn't it be nice if you heard more of these words:

Thank you...

Love you...

Appreciate you...

Or maybe even:

You are doing a great job...

You are making a difference...

I got this, go ahead, take a day off...

Many of us find ourselves living in fear and yet, we are asked to be brave.

I dare say we are already brave.

Brave enough to fight for our family's well-being, our business, the right to stay home, the right to meet in person, the right to rally, and the right to vote.

Brave enough to speak up.

Brave enough to speak out.

Brave enough to apologize.

Brave enough to ask for help.

Brave enough to give help.

Brave enough to step back.

Brave enough to step forward.

Brave enough to stand alone.

Brave enough to stand together.

Because together, we are ALWAYS brave. ☯

Paula D'Amico is the 2020/2021 president of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara and owner of Blessings By Nature®

Diamond Chapter Partner

KeyBank



KeyBank, a Fortune 500 company, is proud to call Larkinville in Buffalo, New York its Northeast Regional Headquarters. KeyCorp is one of the nation's largest bank based financial services companies with approximately \$145 billion in total assets as of December 31, 2019. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Key provides deposit, lending, cash management and investment services to more than 3.5 million clients in 15 states.

Our purpose is to help our clients and the communities we serve thrive. This is reflected in our commitment to diversity, inclusion, philanthropy and encouraging our more than 17,000 employees to give back by volunteering. We are very proud of our award-winning culture. In 2019, KeyBank was once again recognized by Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service, as one of the most Community-Minded Companies in the United States. KeyBank has also been ranked one of the Top 50 Companies for Diversity by Diversity, Inc and is one of the only top 25 U.S. national banks to receive nine consecutive "Outstanding" Community Reinvestment Act ratings.

KeyBank has a long history of helping women entrepreneurs and leaders thrive. One area that sets us apart is our Key4Women initiative. Key4Women provides networking opportunities, thought leadership, customized financial services and capital to help women achieve their personal and business financial goals.

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Jeanne Hellert and Joyce DeLong

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Articles

Email submissions: info@nawbowny.org. Contributed articles must be original work; previously published works must be accompanied by publisher's authorization to reprint. *womanink* reserves the right to edit contributed articles for clarity and length, and reserves the right to refuse to publish any contributed article.

Advertising

ANNUAL AD RATES AND SIZES:

Ads run in 2 hard-copy issues (typically Fall and Winter)

Full pg (7 1/2" x 10") \$1,000 Half pg (7 1/2" x 4 3/4") \$525

Quarter pg (3 3/4" x 4 3/4") \$225 Business card (3 1/8" x 1 7/8") \$125

Specs

Please send your business card and a check (made payable to NAWBO) to: Jeanne Hellert, P.O. Box 1165, Orchard Park, NY 14127. For electronic submissions, preferred formats: PDF, eps or tif. Email files or questions to: info@nawbowny.org.

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Sherrie Barr Mack

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Allyship

Echoing the charge taken up by NAWBO National, the Buffalo Niagara chapter has established a Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, chaired by immediate past president Sherrie Barr Mack. The members of the Task Force worked to create a mission that reflects the importance of inclusion and equity in our organization as well as in our individual businesses:

Honoring NAWBO's core mission to build strategic alliances, coalitions, and affiliations, the Buffalo Niagara Diversity & Inclusion Task Force actively works to diversify our chapter's membership. We also will facilitate conversation, growth, and education around the critical concepts of diversity and inclusion including but not limited to race, culture, gender identity, age, ability, and ethnicity to promote and support all women and their businesses. We shall hold our chapter to high standards for meaningful justice and equity through education, public policy, and information sessions to build awareness and inclusivity in our community.

The Task Force's first initiative was the Wednesday, August 26th session with Dr. Ursuline ("Ursie") Bankhead, a local psychologist who's a nationally-known trainer on these issues. Dr. Ursie Bankhead was engaging, focusing on why inclusion and equity demonstrably improves business outcome. We are grateful to welcome Dr. Ursie as a member of our NAWBO chapter.

Look for additional diversity, equity, and inclusion events throughout the year. Together, we're stronger. 🌐

Sherrie Barr-Mack is co-founder of The MackBarr Group

Diamond Chapter Partner

M&T Bank

Buffalo is fortunate to have many innovators, creative leaders and people unafraid to take ambitious risks. Driven by inspiration, tireless hard work and an entrepreneurial attitude, they are making meaningful and measurable impacts on our community.

That's one of the reasons my colleagues and I at M&T Bank support NAWBO. We understand how important it is to provide information and insights to local businesses, and to recognize the achievements of women entrepreneurs in the Western New York market.

At M&T Bank, we are dedicated to helping our neighbors succeed and our communities thrive. It starts with our commitment to understand what's important to our customers. We get to know them, their needs and their priorities in order to help them achieve their goals. We take a similar approach to serving our communities – working to understand what matters most, so we can do our part to help Buffalo, and the entire WNY region, grow even stronger.

M&T Bank and NAWBO Buffalo Niagara share this community-focused mission. Together, we will make the future of Buffalo shine bright. M&T Bank is pleased to partner with NAWBO and its members to assist in promoting the success of women-owned businesses in our WNY community.

Mark L. Martin

M&T Bank, WNY Business Banking Regional Manager

(Mark retired in 2020, his replacement chapter partner representative will be named soon.)

Sherrie Barr Mack
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COVID-19 and the Launch of StartupFundHub.com

On March 22nd we at E.B. Howard Consulting started maintaining a list of COVID-19 focused recovery funding for small businesses. This was initially just a blog post that we kept coming back to update. It got tedious really quickly. As there was so much funding coming out to support recovery efforts for small businesses we could hardly keep up.



Christine Howard

We felt like maintaining the list and updating the blog post and making sure that it went out to social media was a daily, if not multiple times of day, update commitment. Time-consuming was an understatement given the ever-changing landscape COVID-19 presented the small business community. So, we had to pivot, and we had to pivot quickly.

On March 31st we launched Startup Fund Hub (StartupFundHub.com). In a matter of days, we had StartupFundHub.com up and running. From the start, we ensured that there was FREE access to our COVID-19 database.

The focus of the COVID-19 database was and is on grants or types of non-dilutive funding (funding that you don't have to pay back and/or won't take equity from the company) for small business owners that are focused on recovery efforts or are focused on addressing the COVID-19 space.

By the end of July, we quietly launched the rest of the subscription-based platform where subscribers can search for other non-dilutive funding for their small businesses for a small fee. The COVID-19 database is still FREE. However, we are asking for individuals to sign-up for free access to the COVID-19 database.

With a paid subscription, subscribers can search by location, funding amount, industry, funding type, and so much more. Plus you have access to thousands of funding opportunities from grants, incubators, accelerators, pitch competitions, and more. All with the focus of propelling small business owners into their next stage of ownership.

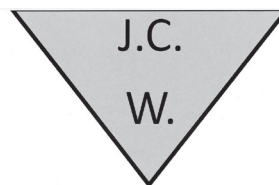
You can see more about the services E.B. Howard Consulting provides at EBHoward.com and more about Startup Fund Hub at StartupFundHub.com ☎

Christine E.B. Howard is the founder, owner, and president of E.B. Howard Consulting



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COVID-19 and Its Effect on Rove



Jackie Lennert

If you asked me in January where I thought Rove would be at the end of 2020, I would have said, "on track and positioned to scale up. I started out on that growth track by being 34.7% up for the first 2 ½ months of 2020, then March 14th came, and Rove closed until June 24th due to COVID-19.

The first 2 weeks of closure were strange and uncertain. My husband lost his job, Rove was closed, and my girls were both home but able to work from their homes so they were okay. Honestly, I was more scared for my family than my business in the beginning, but I knew I had to make a plan if Rove was to remain in business.

Immediately, I immersed myself in NAWBO updates from Elle Patout. As quickly as she posted was as quickly as I followed along. I signed up for the zoom meetings, followed the Facebook postings, and of course followed the daily news for any type of guidance in what to do with my business and how it could survive. What financial help would be available? I followed all possible opportunities including EIDL, PPP, Unemployment help, and grant opportunities. Then, March 31st came and my family was rocked by the reality of COVID-19.

My ex-husband Chuck entered Kenmore Mercy Hospital with COVID-19, only to pass 6 days later. I was honestly paralyzed. Now I was facing my husband being unemployed, my business was closed, and our completely blended divorced family lost a healthy 58-year-old father to my daughters and a community of friends and family.

Now what? The burden was heavy and I was in uncharted territory. I truly had no idea how to move forward. While the days passed, I dug in like I always do. I moved forward minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day. I had to be strong not only for my daughters but also for myself. I had to figure out what I wanted. Do I close Rove, do I restructure its current business model, or do I think of it bigger and better?

Here was the fork in the road and I had to choose which way to go. I had to put my big girl panties on and make some really tough decisions. But did I believe in myself and my abilities?

Fast forward to August 2020. Rove is open and completely restructured from top to bottom. The only thing that feels the same is the name. I dug in and did the work needed to pivot during a pandemic. I came up with a plan. I used the limited funds from an EIDL loan and made the necessary changes to get Rove sustainable. This included a streamlined inventory system that supports both online and in the store, I educated myself on better buying streams that would help my profit margins, and I sought help with what I wasn't good at, such as accounting, business structure, and social media.

And finally, I bought back a part of my business that was leased due to the 2018 construction project that almost wiped out Rove then. No stone was left unturned. I even reached out to a NAWBO member I met during Advocacy 2019, Megan Patton, whose business helps you restructure, gauge growth, plan ahead, and reach your business goals. I spent the time, and yes the money to rebuild a better business than when I closed in March. I worked tirelessly on my reopening plan and even delayed reopening until all business measures were in place. This was my final try and I was holding myself accountable.

Today, I can report that Rove is moving in the right direction. Business is picking up, I am able to be a safe place to shop within the community and online, and I have the proper plans in place to move Rove forward even in uncertain times such as these. I also have a backup plan in place should a second closure happen due to COVID-19.

I am a better business owner and all that means including helping those just like me. Letting them know to believe in their abilities and draw on their strength buried deep within. You can learn even in dark and uncertain times. Trust your gut and ask for what you need. There's no shame in not having all the answers. You will come out better on the other side. ☺

Jackie Lennert is the owner of Rove Jewelry, Accessories & Gifts, LLC

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Moving Forward in the Communal Solitude

When the pandemic struck, no one knew what to expect, but owning a business that garnered much of our revenue from weddings and events, I was definitely worried about what the future would bring...or not bring.



Janna Willoughby-Lohr

I immediately pivoted our marketing focus to our online store for gifts and worked on making improvements to our shipping and packaging procedures to make online shopping easier for my customers. I also spent a lot of time online in social media networking groups looking for where people had needs that my company could fill. I quickly realized that many of the flower shops were either closed entirely or working with very few staff and inventory. Since we make paper flowers, I saw a way we could help people to get flowers when they were hard to come by. I began posting on our social media pages about the benefits of paper flowers and letting people know that we were open and available to provide them. Orders started coming in right away, mainly for funerals and memorials as well as gifts for people in nursing homes who couldn't have visitors. All of a sudden, I was fielding more orders than I could keep up with in a regular 8-hour work day.

My studio is in the same building where I live, so I was still going to work every day, sometimes for 12-14 hours a day to catch up on things that couldn't be done virtually and slowly chipping away at the ever-present entrepreneurial to-do list. My assistant was reassigned to work from home as soon as the shutdown started and I set to work finding things she could do like posting on social media and assembling flowers and then bringing them back to the studio. Within a few weeks of the shutdown, however, my assistant was offered her dream job and had to resign. I was very busy trying to keep up with the orders, look for new staff, continuously making improvements to our website and social media to keep business humming along.

Needless to say, I was exhausted, but also exhilarated. It made me feel so grateful that I had created a business that could bring joy and peace to people during such a difficult time. Knowing that I had a company that was flexible enough to adapt to these conditions cemented my resolve that I was truly on the right path. ☺

Janna Willoughby-Lohr owns Papercraft Miracles



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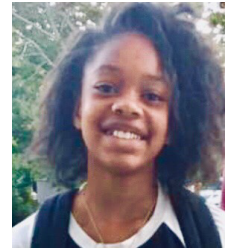
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Greetings from NAWBO NextGen

Hello from NAWBO NextGen! We are extremely excited to begin this upcoming school year. While we have been off, we have had the opportunity to come up with some great entrepreneurial ideas to establish ourselves as teen business owners. We have also talked about being role models in the entrepreneurial teenage community and are so thankful to the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NAWBO for including us in your chapter's community, the EORO event, and giving us an opportunity to spend time with business owners and get to know them.

As future entrepreneurs, we look to the women of NAWBO as mentors and leaders in the community. As we begin the school year and discover through our studies what subjects we like, and are good at, we excitedly look forward to the upcoming year to hopefully work with your chapter and learn more about your businesses and hopefully experience careers that might be right for us. We are looking forward to working with the leaders of NAWBO on putting a plan together for us high school students. The pandemic might

limit us to the things we can experience during the remaining of our high school year, but it will not stop us from reaching high to accomplish our dreams. Soon we will all be able to reminisce about our adventure that led us to our destination. ☺



Kendyll Mack

NextGen: Kyla Mack, Kalen Baith, Michael Burgos, Olivia Krytus, Alannah Kaifs-Concha, Antoinette Pendergrass, Kendyll Mack, Gianna Williams, Gabriella Phifer

Representing these schools: Grand Island High School, City Honors, Performing Arts, Cardinal O'Hara, and Kenmore East.



Recharged, Rested, and Now Ready

Navigating through a pandemic is incredibly rough, especially as a woman business owner. This pandemic effected my business immensely. My business was shut down completely. As a real estate agent, I am used to being on the go or on call 100% of the time. Having everything go from 100 to 0 in an instant is terrifying.

However, this pandemic gave me time to reflect and refocus. I realized that during this time, my clients needed sympathy and a break, and quite frankly, so did I. My unintended time off gave me time to recharge and once I was rested, I was ready. It really is true that you must take care of yourself before you can take care of others.

It's also very true that you get by with a little help from your friends. During this time, I leaned on my NAWBO sisters. Specifically, my NAWBO sister Stephanie Kennedy, who revamped my online and social media presence. We didn't bother potential clients or prospects because it didn't feel like it was the right time. We took the time to really dig into my plans and goals for the year and I already had people reaching out to me!

I also leaned on a NAWBO idea of handwritten notes. I had a bunch of

extra time, so I decided to write notes to a majority of my clients. The notes were happy and focused toward a little pick-me-up during uncertain times. It truly is the little things that matter. I wanted my clients to know that I was thinking about them and they reached out and were very appreciative.

During this uncertain time, it was reassuring to know that I had my NAWBO sisters. They really keep me going, even just to talk to. This pandemic is scary, but we are all going through it together. There is a light at the end of the tunnel and taking care of yourself is the most important thing. ☺



Amber Reaume

Amber Reaume is a Licensed Real Estate Salesperson with HUNT Real Estate/Reaume Real Estate LLC



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How the Pandemic Has Affected My Interior Design Business

Who could have known the news broadcast on Friday March 20th, closing all essential businesses would give the definition of “working from home” a whole new meaning?

Janelle Kurtzman

I have never had an office outside of my home office since I started my own business more than 25 years ago. Starting a business in the 80s, I avoided the knowledge of a home-based office as much as possible. Those days it was frowned upon, especially in the interior design field to work from home. Many times, the career was labeled a “hobby” and not recognized as a profession. Fast forward to March 21, 2020 – here we are with most of the world working from home! Not only are we working from home, but we are taking on additional roles of teacher, caregiver, cook and cleaner!

I have always been a hands-on designer – feel the fabrics, see the paint swatch on the wall, or stand in the space to feel its character. For me the pandemic forced me to change my work preference. In order to continue servicing my existing clients, as well as determine new means of networking to engage new clients, I needed a new approach. My visual presentation boards turned into power point presentations and meetings using phone conversations or the now famous, Zoom meeting format. I have never been a technical person so for me these were new skills. (I am still, by the way, learning how to navigate these.) It took a while to get into the “virtual groove” but surprisingly, I found clients receptive and willing to go this route until we could meet in person.

My conversations with clients are changing. More and more, they see the value in spending money in their homes or businesses. We are focusing on their needs themselves and what will function best for them in conjunction with their family members. Going into our sixth month of “new normal” I find home owners are looking at details. Living areas are requiring separable spaces, both for socializing and work. Sliding doors or pocket doors may keep an area solely for educating during the hybrid school year.

Commercial spaces are involving interior designers in the overall wellness of buildings. During the shut down I was able to attend many webinars and CEU courses that engaged the elements of a healthier workplace – air circulation, water quality, cleanability and sanitizing of upholstery and materials. These often included design panels from other cities and countries. It was a means of bringing a profession together in a way that ordinarily would never happen.

No one knew this was coming and no one knows what lies ahead. I do know that people will always need a place to live. Whether it is a single dwelling or a community high rise, their space has to be a safe, healthy environment to live, work and play within. I am here to help achieve that goal as a professional interior designer. ☺

Janelle Kurtzman owns Janelle Kurtzman Interiors

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Nicholle Overkamp

The coronavirus pandemic has taken the world by storm, and no one could have predicted or prepared for the impact it has had across all areas of life. Dealing with the pandemic as an entrepreneur forced us to shift how we do business. When the virus began to take its toll in late February, we hit it head on and over communicated with our clients and everyone within our network what was going on and what to start preparing for. As the markets were dropping and there was an uptick in volatility, we continued and increased our communication.

We saw what was going on and knew it was going to be bad. We did not shy away from the fear or run away and be silent. We established the expectation that things were going to be worse before anything gets better. From a financial planning perspective, we knew this would make or break our firm, but we planned to be the firm on the other side that makes it through. We also made ourselves available to the community, to serve those with questions and concerns.

With the intention of thriving through the pandemic, we choose to dig in and consider who needs help, both clients and non-clients. March comprised of non-stop calls. In April, we created free online workshops, offered free calls to

anyone to discuss investments or the fear of the market, and presented educational workshops at no cost for local non-profits and companies alike. We provided as much education as we could and reached out to anyone who needed to talk who might not have an expert relationship. We believe it is our duty, as professionals and experts in our field, to serve our community, to be accessible and available, and be visible instead of retreating. So, we lunged forward towards the chaos and designed a new direction for our firm.

This was sort of a grieving process for my partner, Sarah Blankenship, and I. We understood and had to accept the fact we were not going back to normal. We had to think about how to move forward. What we can offer that we don't have right now and how we can do better? Sarah and I developed educational programming and online courses and made them accessible to our community. This was a lot of work and we put in a lot of hours, but now we have another silo of business and income stream. When you're an entrepreneur, you can never take anything for granted or make too many assumptions. You always need to be able to accept a pivot and change the way you do business. You need to act, swallow your own fear, and forgo excuse making. As entrepreneurs we need to learn the trends and figure out what they will be so we can decide how best we can serve our people while continue to grow a business of impact. ☺

Nicholle Overkamp is the CEO and owner of Wilcox Financial Group, LLC



Kimberly Pachetti

What I Learned to Do During COVID

My business is a retail business. We (my sister and I) sell hand-crafted CBD products. Guess what the hardest way to sell CBD products is? Online. Yep. It is near impossible to find a reputable, affordable credit card processor for online-CBD sales. We weren't too concerned about that in 2019 because our wholesale, consignment, and direct-to-consumer sales were great. Then Covid... How many times have we heard that over the past few months?

So our sales plummeted, and we didn't pivot (seriously, how many times have you heard that word lately?). Let me repeat. We did not pivot. We tried in the beginning, but the burden was

too heavy. What with the day job, my three-year-old, the strain at home, I'm surprised I was able to get out of bed, let alone figure out what the hell pivot means.

I gave up. I'm not saying I gave up on the business. We're still alive and well. I gave up trying to force something to happen. I just let that go. Instead, I focused on self-care and prioritizing my life. For me, that meant taking my precocious three-year-old out into the country (which is where I grew up), and I taught her to eat wild raspberries, catch minnows and crayfish, climb over fallen trees, and smell wildflowers. Only when I found my peace watching my daughter blossom in the country was I able to accept the reality of our world and come to a reck-

oning about the future of our business.

I started to manifest a business plan that wasn't forced. I thought deeply about the purpose of our business (helping people find plant-based alternatives for pain, anxiety, and other chronic issues), and I simply kept that in my heart. I visioned a future where our products positively impacted people's lives, and my sister and I talked about that and held it close. And we're doing okay. We've had some unexpected opportunities pop up, we've made some new partnerships, and, best of all, we feel good about it.

I'm not sure we could ever get a business loan with this plan, but I know for sure that now, in the time of COVID, manifesting positive energy was the best thing we could have done. ☺

Kim Pachetti is the president of Naniwan Luxe, LLC



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7 Everywhere
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How a Decision to Help our Community Helped my Small Business

These COVID times have changed the very nature of the way I do business, as I'm sure it has for all of us. Zoom – nine months ago I hadn't even heard of it! – is now a thing. Email has become even more critical to keep in touch. I meet with current or potential clients in outdoor spaces or six feet apart, masked – always a mask now!

In the past I connected with new clients one-on-one, by networking – thank you NAWBO! – through referrals – thank you NAWBO members! – or at business meetings and events. Even with our difficult economic climate, my current clients still need brochures, graphics, social media posts, signs. It's been immensely gratifying to know they trust me to take care of their projects.

But still.

Despite these loyal clients, White Rabbit Design, my branding and graphic design business, has suffered. And, as many events and fairs have been cancelled or severely curtailed, Buffalo Gals, my "pop-up store" of Buffalove-themed gifts, has languished. In the interim, internet sales have become much more important to my bottom line. With that in mind, I redesigned my Buffalo Gals website and started a more focused social media campaign; Instagram, in particular, is a great visual medium for showcasing products.

I also took a long hard look at myself.

I'm pretty fortunate, but there are so many Western New Yorkers who are facing, some for the first time, hunger. Our neighbors and friends who, as this misery has dragged on into nine months, are still or newly unemployed, now face losing their homes, or cannot afford food for their families. And ever since this dreadful disease turned our lives inside out and upside down I've searched for a way to help our community.

In 2017, in commemoration of the centennial of the United States entering World War 1, I designed a graphic print based on the Liberty Bond "Buffalo Will See It Through" poster used in bond drives in Buffalo. And it seemed an appropriate icon for our current "war" again coronavirus.

I reworked my original design into a poster and a companion coloring sheet, both designed for display to evoke the City of Good Neighbors and help uplift our Buffalo spirit. I decided that for each poster sold I'd donate 20% of the proceeds to FeedMore WNY, which supplies food banks, homeless shelters, mobile food pantries, and soup kitchens, as well as Meals on Wheels.

I'm a firm believer that small businesses should support each other, so all the materials were printed locally by



Katharine Smith

NAWBO member Joyce DeLong's Allegra Printing.

Embracing the new reality of running a business.

By April everything was ready, but how to get the word out? It was a combination of old school mailings, social media, and word of mouth. I mailed posters to friends and some prolific social media influencers I know, asking if they'd post images of the "Buffalo Will See It Through" poster and mention the donation to FeedMore each purchase would bring.

It was a wonderful launch for the "Buffalo Will See It Through" posters. The first sale came on April 15th and for the next two weeks sales came in daily, sometimes up to 10 orders a day! Many people bought multiple posters, some also purchased note cards and my Buffalo-themed prints, helping support my small business. I had to reprint the coloring sheets, after deciding I'd include two sheets with each order instead of the one I'd originally budgeted.

While sales have slowed from the initial numbers, I've used other online means to reach potential buyers, including community boosters (every time Step Out Buffalo's free "Community Updates" email blast goes out I get several sales, including my very first out-of-state sales from expats in Florida, Washington D.C., New Hampshire, and California). I signed up for The Buffalo News "Support Local Now" small business initiative. Retail New York is another online business listing that has helped with exposure. I recently became part of the Amherst Chamber "Shop 716 Gift Card" program.

And there's still time for Christmas sales of my Buffalove cards and prints, so I'm cautiously optimistic.



Buffalo is still a small town: like Cheers, "Everybody knows your name."

As part of this new business strategy, I've worked hard to make the virtual feel personal: I started a "Stories" section on my Buffalo Gals site with a "thank you" to every person who's bought a poster, plus snippets of Buffalo lore and pictures of our amazing city. My Instagram feed features images of my in-person tour of the murals and public art all over the city, plus our amazing architecture – each photo taken includes a Buffalo Gals note card (no Photoshopping!). And every online order includes a personal handwritten thank you note from me.

The best part? Because of the sales of the "Buffalo Will See It Through" posters, as promised, I've sent donations each month to FeedMore WNY. Truly Buffalo IS the City of Good Neighbors. ☺

Katharine Smith is a founding member of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara, the owner of White Rabbit Design, and creator of Buffalo Gals



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