

Wear Your Heart on Your *T-Shirt* Sleeve

Submitted by Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area

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Being a waitress and factory worker for many years can be tough. Getting laid off and starting over can be even tougher. That was the case for Sharon Nicolson. But instead of working odd jobs just to make ends meet, she went back to school, took courses in business, and came up with a creative solution for employment.

“For mad money, I had started making custom stickers, and took them with me to sell at gatherings and events.” explained Sharon. Combining her technical skills with print transfer, her new business training and entrepreneurial spirit, Nicolson created **The Great Canadian T-Shirt Company**. “I had a lot of the equipment already, and I noticed that there wasn’t a shop offering “no minimum orders”. So, the idea turned into a business, and here I am!” The brick and mortar shop opened its doors downtown in September of 2012. The company specializes in custom printed and dyed clothing - ***with no minimum orders!*** And the business is growing as fast as a kid grows out of his t-shirt!

The shop moved last autumn to its current location on 277 8th Street East. This cosy storefront is set up like a kitchen, reminiscent of Sharon’s days gone by in the food industry! “There is the order area, the prep station, the work area, the ‘griddles’ and the serve area! It makes the process smooth, especially when we have bigger orders.” Currently the business offers full colour transfer and dyed graphics on a wide assortment of clothing, beverage items, phone covers and wedding merchandise. Most recently Sharon has added glass etching, tiles and canvas art printing to her roster of products and print-ware.

Although Sharon is a one-person enterprise, last year she was able to take on a high school co-op student. “She is great: a quick learner, and a hard worker.” Sharon is happy to have hired her part time for this summer to help out with orders and the walk-ins at the store. Sharon said she would like to eventually expand the company’s services to another location or a few. “I love that I’m in Owen Sound, but my work is expanding out toward Port Elgin, Chesley, and Meaford. It would be nice to have Great Canadian T’s in some other communities in our region!” stated Nicolson. And of course, she would also like to hire people to join the team that share the vision of the business and customer service.

“I have been doing many orders from schools, teams, groups of weekenders, to unique orders for weddings, memorials, and baby announcements!” Customers can send their photos and ideas to Sharon through email, and discuss their design needs. But it is definitely better to walk into the easily accessible storefront to see all of the products, feel the materials, and get inspired for an individualized and often unique item. Sharon discusses the possibilities, and the limitations (such as trademark logos,

famous people photos, etc), and is always game to try something new! Whether it is one Tee or mug, or 100 shirts for a corporate event, your product will be individualized to suit your needs, and printed on the highest quality products. "You don't need to be a big store to offer a great variety, or handle large orders. We may be small, but we are mighty, and supply excellent products, specialized service and pricing competitive to larger franchises and online stores." Furthermore, Sharon stands behind her work and all of TGCTC's products are fully guaranteed. Top that off with free delivery from Chatsworth to Chesley, this small digital era Tee Shop with good old-fashioned service values stands out in the crowd. Be sure to check them out next time you are Downtown. You will be pleasantly surprised at the possibilities!



The Great Canadian T-Shirt Company
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