



Kidcasso Inc. owner Laura-Marie Small is a true American Dream story.

Originally from Rochester, New York, Laura-Marie moved to Wakefield in 2006 with her husband, Chris. She worked as an art teacher in the Watertown Public Schools, and, in 2007, she opened a summer art school in a converted garage on the property of her Greenwood Street home. By 2008, Laura-Marie moved that successful program to a storefront on Albion Street and Kidcasso was born.

Her dream of a studio that provides art classes and programs for children beginning as early as six months of age evolved into a safe zone for children to grow and understand themselves through art. Her business, Kidcasso, is fine arts driven and is a perfect match for both the serious artist and individuals who are interested in art for process.

When asked why she opened her business in Wakefield, Laura-Marie explained that she believes that home and a successful business are connected. In order to succeed, according to Laura-Marie, you have to be “all in” and to have a brand who reflects who you are.

So who is Laura-Marie? Her family were her role models and, having had careers in education and business, they taught her to always give back to the community. When she was diagnosed with a learning disability at age eight, her parents encouraged her to know herself, understand her learning style, and that would in turn give her tools for personal success. As a result, she became self-motivated and her own advocate at an early age. This “don’t take no for an answer” style has certainly made Kidcasso a successful small business story. Her education as an undergraduate at Fairfield University only strengthened her belief that giving back of her talents and time was essential to personal and professional success.

Since 2007, Laura-Marie has been involved with Wakefield Town events and programs. This is the embodiment of “walking the walk” when it comes to being involved in your town. She is certainly invested in Wakefield as her home and professional life. Growing a business is hard work. Learning - whether through research on the computer or advice from fellow business owners - is something she never stops doing.

Capitalizing on what we have in downtown Wakefield and embracing the positive is key to building a stronger business community. Laura-Marie researches trends and information on top businesses and believes that’s where you will find your audience. Shop owners need to know each other and work together to share ideas, cross promoting and advising each other to capitalize on individual talents. Wakefield should also seek to coexist with corporate business to set the bar higher. Customers look at the “cover” first, so take pride in your stores appearance inside and out. Visual impression is important to attracting and keeping customers. And don’t underestimate the power of a friendly greeting.

Laura-Marie sees that in 2016, the trend is to bring back the neighborhood, not only at your home, but in downtowns. Downtowns are seen as meeting places and businesses should embrace that idea to strengthen their business and their community. Always be looking for a way to connect with customers and community.

Currently she and her employees teach more than 200 students per week from as far north as New Hampshire and as far south as Quincy. She also has won Boston’s Best Fine Art studio two years in a row (2013/2014) even beating the MFA!

What’s next for Kidcasso? Kidcasso became incorporated in January 2016, and her current goal is to franchise so that in three years, there are three more Kidcasso Studios. This year, Laura-Marie will work to make the Wakefield Studio strong internally in order to train that next team.

NOTE:

Wakefield Main Streets, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 organization that was established in 2014 and works to establish and promote downtown Wakefield as a vibrant, inviting destination by fostering historic preservation, economic renewal, and community involvement."

Wakefield Main Streets: Revitalizing Downtown Together