



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Laura Shabott: The business of being an artist

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Laura Shabott
Artist, Provincetown

Like many artists who land in Provincetown, Laura Shabott is a wash ashore. She first learned about the storied art colony from a friend in the early 90’s, while attending art school. After graduation in 1995, she moved to the Cape full time.

Laura spent her early years in Provincetown exploring a number of different mediums, including writing and acting. Laura describes her early art career as being unique to a small artist community. “You have the opportunity to create different types of art with help from friends and the community,” notes Laura who is now primarily a painter. “On the other hand, there are sixty galleries in this small town, so it’s very competitive.”

Laura first met Pam Andersen, the CDP’s Director of Business and Credit Programs in the fall of 2019 while attending the *Marketing Musts* workshop series. She was busy painting and working as an instructor, but was looking to expand her business.

Before the COVID19 outbreak the CDP held monthly office hours at the Provincetown Commons – a collaborative workspace for creative professionals -- to offer technical assistance, mentoring and workshops to local business owners. Bringing the CDP’s services to Provincetown made them more accessible to business owners who find it challenging to get to Eastham. Reflecting on her first in-person meeting with Pam, Laura says “I walked in with a six foot by four-foot piece of paper with all my questions,” recalls Laura.



Laura with one of her paintings displayed at Provincetown Commons

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Early in her career Laura had seen herself as more of an artist and less of a business person. “That’s the thing about art schools,” says Laura, “They don’t always teach you about the business.” Laura was extremely impressed by Pam’s willingness to listen, and her business knowledge as it pertained to the Lower and Outer Cape. Laura notes of her meetings with Pam, “She has a great understanding of laws of business that can be applied to any type of business, and how to apply them to my situation.” This year alone, Pam has provided technical assistance to over 130 different businesses covering a variety of business sectors.

After working with Pam, Laura decided to apply for WE CAN’s Get Results with Others’ Wisdom (GROW) program for the Spring 2020 session. Early this year, with funding from Mass Growth Capital Corporation, the CDP partnered with WE CAN to bring this program to more businesses on the Lower and Outer Cape. The six-session peer mentoring program is designed to give women entrepreneurs the support and the business skills needed to successfully build and grow their business.

Laura and her cohort had completed only two of the six sessions before the Coronavirus forced them to move to an online platform. Laura’s experience in the GROW program helped her build upon the previous discussions that she had with Pam. “By the end you are very clear about what your business is, cash flow, and other basic business skills like identifying a mission statement,” recalls Laura.

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus, Laura has moved all of her classes online and has even participated in three virtual art shows. “The good thing about moving online,” says Laura, “is that I can teach people from all over and they don’t have to come try and live in Provincetown.” While many others have seen their business suffer as a result of the pandemic, Laura has actually been able to grow her business. “I hired an assistant to help facilitate my workshops,” says Laura. “It’s a big leap to hire an employee, but I was able to create a job in the middle of the pandemic thanks to the CDP and the GROW program.”

Laura has seen her business take-off since working with the CDP and completing the GROW program. She is grateful for the work the CDP and other organizations do to support residents of the Lower and Outer Cape. She says, “The arts industry on the Cape is a real thing, it is a viable part of the Cape Cod economy, and artists shouldn’t be afraid to reach out.”