



TownBusiness

Local media guru's jewelry helps women in more ways than one

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Town Crier

"I'm not doing this to feed my kids," so says the brains behind Terri Michael — Stoned Originals Jewelry, an online business celebrating its first anniversary with an invitation-only "Celebrate the Power of Women" fundraising event Nov. 20.

Michael launched her online company of "funky elegant jewellery" one year ago at a party by raising \$2,000 for the Redwood, a local non-profit organization helping women and their children leave abusive lives.

Though Michael is hesitant to put a number on what the second annual fundraiser could raise, she says the response so far has been promising.

"The initial 'save the date' notification has already generated absolute glee amongst the women that have been invited to attend this year's party," said Michael on Oct. 11, adding that "can only mean good things for the Redwood".

The Bayview Mills resident and former radio personality had been designing jewellery since the 1970s. She started Stoned Originals because she could never find jewellery that could compliment her long neck and small wrists.

But giving back to the community, she says, was just as important as the business itself.

Michael donates three percent of online sales to handpicked charities in eight cities across Canada and the U.S. that help women transitioning from abusive relationships.

"I want this money to count," she

says.

After last year's launch, she initially thought the \$2,000 cheque was too small. But then she received a call from the director of the Redwood thanking her and calling her a major sponsor.

"My jaw hit the floor," she says recalling the conversation.

From that moment on, Michael started thinking big. "There's a need," she said. "(Domestic abuse victims) are ignored."

Michael is also big on helping clients who need advice on what types of jewellery to wear, often answering email questions and looking at photos clients send her of outfits that need accessorizing.

"If it starts to get too involved, I'll just pick up the phone," she says.

Not just women need advice. Many men need assistance buying gifts for the women in their lives. For that Michael has designed a "Help for Guys" page on her website.

Though Michael is clearly a big thinker, there's one thing about Stoned Originals that isn't overly big, and that's the jewellery.

She says her designs are "quietly elegant" and pack

a wallop statement-wise, "without being the size of a potato".

The trend in jewellery, she says, is bulky — something many women simply can't do.

Michael's most popular and versatile designs are her "clusters". Long stone-encrusted necklaces that can be worn as a single strand or wound twice around the neck.

Employing several local jewellers she trained herself, Michael is always creating in her studio, so she can keep adding new designs to her website every few weeks.

An online business can never be static, she says.



MODEL: Terri Michael of Stoned Originals wearing one of her most popular pieces, the cluster necklace.

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