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Posted on July 14, 2023 by Rob Borkowski — Leave a comment

Fulcrum Stained Glass Leverages RIDDC Aid



[CREDIT: Fulcrum Stained Glass] Renee Metro, owner of Fulcrum Stained Glass Studio, has opened her first brick and mortar space on

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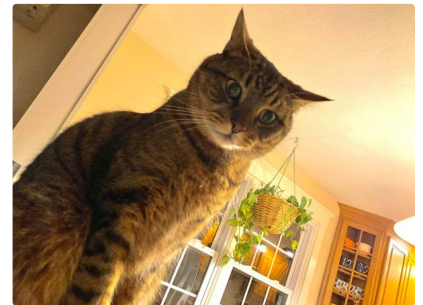
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Post Road.

WARWICK, RI— Renee Metro, a lifelong stained glass art instructor with chronic, often debilitating, Lyme Disease, is settling in at her permanent [Fulcrum Stained Glass](#) studio space on Post Road with the help of the [RI Developmental Disabilities Council's \(RIDDC\)](#).

RIDDC's self-employment business development project, funded by the Department of Labor and Training (DLT), provides business classes and ongoing technical assistance support from experienced business mentors to people like Metro seeking vocational independence. While Metro has run her teaching business since 2018, its “brick and mortar” incarnation journey began more recently, in 2020. As she began expressing her plans for a physical space with friends, they suggested she reach out to Sue Babin and enroll in the RIDDC's business classes first.

Until then, Metro had been exhibiting and selling her work at Hotpoint Emporium in Bristol, RI, since May of 2018. The spot is a retail gallery featuring art of all mediums from more than 30 local artists. The artists' collaborative is enjoyed by vacationers and shoppers year round. Metro noted she's enjoyed some success there.

“My work has sorta gotten noticed around the East Bay,” Metro said.



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Unfortunately, her plans to open her own teaching studio began taking shape at an inopportune time. She started looking for a spot, “And then, COVID hit,” Metro said.

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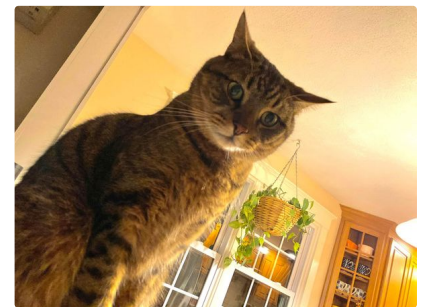
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Not only did in-person businesses everywhere begin a long pause, putting her plans on hold, but Hotpoint also closed for three months. The spot reopened in June 2020, but sales were down. She and Hotpoint's owners and artists stuck with it, and the space has been open full time since the start of 2023, and successfully so, Metro said.

In 2021, Metro began taking the RIDDC business classes, part of the The Business Incubator project funded by the Governor's Workforce Board and Department of Labor and Training's "Real Pathways RI" initiative, which supports partnerships between and among public, private, and nonprofit agencies that focus on serving populations with traditional barriers to employment. The Council partnered with the Center for Women in Enterprise (CWE), Veteran's Business Outreach Center (VBOC) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) to organize the classes and individual counseling with business development specialists.

When the classes were over, Metro had learned a lot about running her own business and marketing it, and received help from the RIDDC in putting those marketing lessons to work, including a business grant to help her get started.

She said that while the classes are available for anyone unemployed who wants to start their own business, she's on disability due to chronic Lyme's disease that was caught too late to treat effectively, leaving her with an initial bout of Bell's Palsy, then migraines, nausea and aches that make her ability to work unpredictable, she said.

"I can't be reliable, because I don't know how I'm going to feel," Metro said. But, "I still wanted to work because I still wanted to do something with my life."

She started learning all she could about creating with stained glass. The name Fulcrum Stained Glass is a reminder of a beginner's mistake she made while scoring a piece of stained glass as she began learning the trade.

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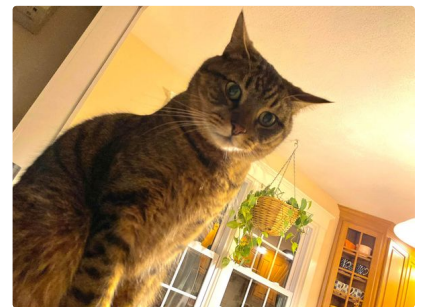
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A tiny chip of glass had been left on the table underneath the sheet she was cutting. The chip had created a fulcrum, causing the glass sheet to break over it as pressure was applied while scoring.

“This became a running joke around the store and I got very used to hearing the word fulcrum. I still remembered that 20 years later and couldn’t resist incorporating it into my own business name and logo,” Metro said.

Creating stained glass by herself was too lonely, she realized. So she attended stained glass classes to get a feel for how students were learning what she knew. As a lifelong student of the art, including apprenticeships at two stained glass studios, Metro had also developed ideas on her own approach.

“I wanted to inspire people to create something that will last. I want to teach them all of the possibilities of stained glass. All of the possibilities,” Metro said.

That includes panels, lamps, signs, and decorative useful objects, she said.

“I want to convey the idea that stained glass isn’t just for church windows anymore,” Metro said.



Author: [Rob Borkowski](#)

Rob has worked as reporter and editor for several publications, including The Kent County Daily Times and Coventry Courier, before working for Gatehouse in MA then moving home with Patch Media. Now he's publisher

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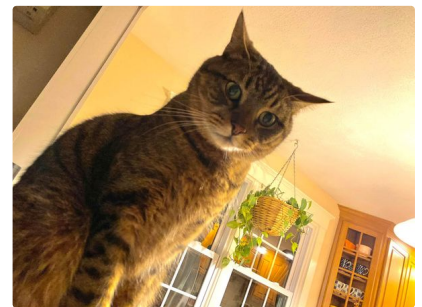
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and editor of WarwickPost.com. Contact him at editor@warwickpost.com with tips, press releases, advertising inquiries, and concerns.

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