



2017 Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneurial Award

As a stay at home mom of four creating skin care products just seemed to make sense. Doreen Roy began making natural goats' milk soaps for her family in 1999. Experimenting further using natural oils and emollients, Doreen introduced new products such as skin creams, lotions, lip balm, and deodorant to her family and friends. With their encouragement, The Wholesome Basket was born in 2004

In the early days, this home-based business sold products through craft shows, local farmers markets, and via the Internet. Demand for the natural goats' milk products grew, and Doreen found herself needing help managing the growth of her business.

Doreen had attended many of the workshops sponsored by the Southeastern SBDC and Southeastern Community College, such as Marketing 101, Branding Your Business, and Facebook for Business. Doreen has a solid background in marketing, but wanted to make sure that she was utilizing all the marketing opportunities available to continue growing her business.

In 2011, Doreen tested her idea of an accessories shop by opening a pop-up shop in Westland mall for the Christmas season. Doreen's new business would carry trendy accessories, jewelry, purses, and scarves, as well as her line of Wholesome Basket products. The timing of this new business opportunity was perfect; Doreen's family was growing up, and the popularity of her products was skyrocketing. Doreen had many questions about combining the new venture with her already-established Wholesome Basket business.

In 2012, after working with the southeastern SBDC to work through the legal organization of the business, the pros and cons of combining the businesses, getting an Iowa Sales Tax permit set up for the new venture, and more importantly, the hiring of employees, Doreen opened Gypsi on Jefferson Street in downtown Burlington. In 2014, Doreen's entrepreneurial spirit was not slowing down and she opened a third business, The Red Door.

Doreen is very involved in the Main Street Program, attending statewide Main Street meetings, mentoring new business owners in downtown Burlington and chairing the marketing committee for Downtown Partners. She has served two, Four year terms on the board of directors for Downtown Partners/Greater Burlington Partnership and has pioneered events such as a Very Merry Vintage Market and the Jefferson Street Farmers Market.

Janine Clover, director of Southeastern Iowa SBDC stated "Doreen is so passionate about helping, nurturing, and bettering downtown Burlington so that other business owners, visitors, and the entire community can enjoy all that downtown Burlington has to offer. She is a positive role model, continually seeking ways to improve her own business and the entire downtown, and is very deserving of this award".

You can visit Doreen's website at www.thewholesomebasket.com, or read the latest about what is happening with the business on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GypsiOnJefferson.