



Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio

Pandemic Gives Small Local Gallery a New Perspective



To provide a welcoming and dynamic space (both in person and online) that encourages creativity, learning and enjoyment through the arts. This has been the mission of Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio since they opened in 2018.

Kerry Walford and Adam Peet opened up Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio in their historic 1840's home located in Cayuga. They are a family run art gallery and studio, that offers art classes for kids and adults, as well as events such as art shows, live music, yoga, paint nights, and much more.

Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio was well received when they opened as residents were excited to have an art studio in their own backyard.





Residents had been travelling upwards of 45 minutes to find suitable classes, and now some students are able to walk down the street to the studio for their class. The gallery also provides a platform for local emerging artists to be able to showcase their work. "They don't have to look to places like Hamilton to get in and we really want to support our local artists," says Kerry.

"The help we received gave us the breathing room to take the time to research what our next move was going to be and where we should focus our attention,"

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio was forced to shut down, like so many other businesses. With no events, no lessons, and a closed gallery, there was zero revenue. Every single event and program had to be refunded. Not knowing what was going to happen or how long the impacts of COVID-19 would be felt, Kerry and Adam looked for assistance and found Grand Erie Business Centre.

"Our experience with Grand Erie Business Centre has been really good. We accessed a couple of different loans which allowed us that breathing room to sort of pivot and make changes where we needed to," says Kerry. "We were able to figure out how we were going to adapt and also to invest into our digital presence.



We developed a few new strategies during the first shut down which have been working well."

Pivoting took a few months, but in June 2020, the art classes went online. This allowed students to continue classes in a safe way. Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio has doubled the number of students that they had prior to COVID. Art kits were also introduced and these could be purchased by anyone. Kerry states, "This was a good way for us to bring good art supplies to Haldimand County to keep people busy. They could pick up the kits, take them home, and do them on their own."

Another change took place on the gallery side. "I'm also an artist so my focus was moving towards offering high quality prints. I was having my work scanned professionally and photographed, and that was very expensive. This has enabled me to do

it in house and sell prints and giclees which has been very popular since COVID hit," says Kerry. In addition, Kerry started a daily painting challenge, and produced a small painting each day. It was something she had not tried before but found a lot of her work was selling quickly online.

Kerry has also been upgrading her own skills in regard to technology, and working on marketing, social media, and website development. Kerry states, "People are seeming to adapt better to digital things, so buying online has become easier for people as they get used to it. So, we're pivoting like everybody, but it's been hard."

An unexpected but positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic has been creating stronger relationships and partnerships with other local businesses. "Businesses are coming together a lot more now to support each other," she says. One such partnership that Kerry is involved in is with Cravings by Britney. Kerry will be painting the baked goods, which will then be put into a calendar.

For the future, Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio hopes to bring in a new teacher in the Fall, as long as in person classes are allowed, as interest in this area has increased since the pandemic began. Kerry and Adam have also been making some modifications to the gallery, and are planning to add an art

track system, which will make it easier to hang and change up the artwork in the gallery. Lastly, is a membership program, which would include classes, merchandise, and prints.

Kerry is very grateful for the support that Grand Erie Business Centre was able to offer. "The help we received gave us the breathing room to take the time to research what our next move was going to be and where we should focus our attention," says Kerry. "It's been nice to be able to plan and to know that I can hire a teacher if I need to, and I can invest in equipment as I need to."

For more information about **Wildwood Art Gallery & Studio** visit www.wildwoodcayuga.com, or contact 905-929-4902.



For more information about **Grand Erie Business Centre** visit www.granderie.com or contact 905-765-5005.

