



# RED ROOSTER BAR & GRILL

AMY WILLIS  
PIERZ MN

Amy Willis and Courtney Guck purchased the Red Rooster Bar and Grill in 2019. After spending 21 years with the Grand Casino Mille Lacs, Amy decided it was time for a new adventure and left her career with the casino to run the Red Rooster. Courtney is a full-time German teacher in a Minnesota K-12 school district and, when not tending to the needs of teaching, he assists in the operational and administrative tasks of the bar. Amy and Courtney suffered a break-in and robbery just one day before the first shutdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Red Rooster Bar and Grill is well known for their Bologna Days, a tradition that has been going for many decades as well as a large Saturday meat raffle and live music on the weekends. The bar has a loyal following of regulars and, with six other bars within a one-mile radius, they are focused on how to set themselves apart while maintaining the core identity of the business.

Once COVID-19 hit, many Minnesota businesses were required to shut down. This necessitated an immediate shift from an in-restaurant business to a temporary business model that relied solely on pick-up and to-go orders. Due to this change, staff was trimmed back to one full-time cook in addition to Amy. They paid bills, suspended what they could, had a heavy mortgage payment, and applied for any available loans and grants. They were pivoting their business to make it work. Once they were authorized to again open their doors, it did not come without restrictions. The business was now running at 50% capacity and found themselves able to fill that 50% capacity over the weekend, but not during the week. They ran specials with live entertainment, Bologna Days, Bingo, various tournaments, spent \$1,000 on outdoor seating amenities, and focused on cost savings in product and inventory as well as on payroll expenses. Gambling through pull-tabs and electronic gaming are offered at the Red Rooster, which provides alternative revenue streams for the business. Weekly promotions and food specials to assist in driving business include Happy Hour drink specials Monday through Saturday, daily homemade lunch specials and the Saturday meat raffle. They feel that they have been able to effectively utilize social media outlets such as Facebook to promote live music and weekly events but are constantly thinking about how to increase their community reach.

Building Connections Group is providing Red Rooster Bar and Grill funds to generate more income with holiday food and drink specials. They report being slowest on Sundays and Tuesdays, but maintain their 6:40 am opening time for the regulars that come in every morning for coffee. At this time, they have no delivery service, so all call-in orders are required to be picked up. Funds provided by Building Connections Group will be utilized for such offers as a \$10 gift card for future dine-in purchases, with the purchase of a to-go order of \$25 or more. This will grow their revenue and estimated \$1,000+ and expand the restaurant's future business. Amy, Courtney, and the Red Rooster Bar and Grill are grateful for the generosity of the Building Connections Group. They feel that it is community support like this that will assist them in navigating these difficult times.



# POWERHOUSE FITNESS AND YOGA STUDIO

ANGIE ZAK  
RED LAKE FALLS, MN

Angie Zak owns Powerhouse Fitness and Yoga in Red Lake Falls and opened her studio November 2017. She operates a 24/7 fitness club, offers classes in yoga, spin, boot camps, one on one personal training, and silver sneakers yoga. Her business had grown and was doing well and she built this all while working her full time job. In February of 2020, she decided to quit her full time job and focus 100% of her time on the studio and the growth. Her customers would travel from all surrounding areas for her classes.

One month later the pandemic hit and her business was closed in March of 2020 through June. She did not have any income flow once she shut down. She reopened in the summer, which is usually a slower time with people wanting to spend time outside, and her customer base was very concerned with coming back into a gym during this pandemic. Many people had signed a 12 month contract, which some cancelled and wanted their money back. Many people were building their own home gyms. Getting customers back through her door has been the biggest struggle. She had lost 2 months of membership dues. She realized she needed to pivot her business and drive in new income. She is surveying her customer base to find out what they want and need. She has tried online classes, she is selling apparel, she purchased new equipment to promote the spin class, she is promoting personal training, and needs to max out her classes to a 10 member full capacity. She is using facebook, referral programs, and word of mouth to promote her business.

Building Connections Group is giving Angie funds for new equipment and a new membership promotion. It is her 3 year anniversary of her business in November so she will promote the first 10 people to sign up and get a free month to encourage immediate members and will provide long term membership plans (sales will be a guaranteed \$500 month for 12 months). She could offer a special for the personal training package since people are hesitant on group classes and give \$50 off a personal training package deal. She will use a portion of the funds for new equipment which her customers stated they want and need to remain loyal at the club. We are excited for Angie to experience growth through this time and set herself up for a successful 2021.





# CUTTING EDGE HAIR DESIGN

BETH ZANK  
NEILLSVILLE, WI

Beth owns Cutting Edge Hair Design in Neillsville, WI. Beth has owned and operated her salon by herself for the past 18 years. Her business has been great and she continues to have dedicated and loyal clients. There are several salons across the surrounding market, however, they each have their specialty and support each other as a tribe. She is a single Mom of 3 children and is greatly involved in the community.

Beth's salon was shut down in march of 2020 due to the mandatory ruling by Wisconsin governor due to COVID 19. She was very scared not knowing what was going to happen and how she would survive without an income. Her business was able to reopen in June and she has been slowly regaining clients. Beth has a steady customer base coming in now, however is limited by the capacity and the time it takes to sanitize throughout the process and in between clients. She works long days and is looking for ways to pivot and work more efficiently and effectively with her time. She shared that her business has a tanning salon in her hair studio and can operate 4 beds which have no expense except the electricity when used. She is booked with her time and clients right now over the next 2 months so she needs to be creative on generating a new income stream with how she is working.

Building Connections Group is giving funds to Beth to use for promoting her services and up selling her products to make more profit over the holiday season as well as booking her services completely through the spring. She will offer all of her clients who are booked through the holiday season an add on service of receiving highlights for \$3-5 each as a special, or a eucalyptus/lavender hot towel treatment on the neck for extra pampering, and gift each customer a choice of nail polish as a holiday gift. She will also sell holiday packages at a sale price of \$25-50 (50% or more profit on each) which will include different levels of gift options, first 20 customers to purchase 2 get a free lotion or tanning lotion or shampoo set, etc.. She will promote moms to treat self, schools for teachers, family friends, college kid gift, employees, etc. This promotion alone will generate \$1000+ and with the add on services and other higher levels of gift packages she will drive in more income. She will also offer a gift package of tanning in December through spring to bring in the people who are bold enough to take vacation or get a tan. We know Beth will be very active and able to generate extra income streams.



# CANNONBELLES CHEESE & CANNONBELLES COFFEE ICE CREAM SHOP

DEEANN LUFKIN  
CANNON FALLS, MN

Deeann is co owner of CannonBelles Cheese and CannonBelles Coffee Ice Cream Shop in Cannon Falls MN with her 2 long term friends and business partners. The cheese has been a great success and they have been making the cheese through the University of MN system. They have been able to utilize the factory to create their own recipes and produce their own cheese. The coffee and ice cream shop has been growing and a success of its own due to the local customers and the busy tourist season through the area. They have specialty ice cream and serve breakfast and lunch. They have built a reputation for their soup and sandwich special.

Once the pandemic hit, they were not allowed inside the University to make their own cheese. The U of M is making it for them in a very limited supply. They are anxious to gain control over the cheese again to add their own specialty flavor and keep the supply up with demand. They created kits partnering with other businesses to promote all of their products, making a bloody mary kit that had several items from local small businesses. They sold them at events at local wineries, breweries, and markets and they sold fast. They have made a MN cheese box and were highlighted in the MN monthly magazine promoting them in their community. They have secured property and are building their own cheese factory that will be ready this spring. The coffee ice cream shop could not allow people in the shop, but continued to offer pick up. They did have to lay off their employees for a month and the owners went with no income. When they reopened the adjustment was to enhance outdoor seating, pick up, curbside, limited capacity seating in house and masks. They were able to keep their loyal customer base with coffee, they had to be specific on food they made to limit the waste, they were promoting ice cream pick up and seating outside. They have not been able to market themselves with any good pics and know if they could market in different free avenues they would drive in more business through the winter months. They also know if they could promote a holiday package with other businesses that would sell and generate profit for all local small businesses.

Building Connections Group is giving funds to CannonBelles for a photo shoot to give them professional photos to use to market their businesses. They will also be given funds to design a holiday package gift they can sell locally. We connected them with another Minnesota small business that designs and makes unique cutting boards with their Thermowood product. They would like to incorporate this into their holiday package or sell in their shop as holiday gifts.

They will discuss making charcuterie boards for their cheese factory and making ice cream flight cutting boards to serve at the ice cream shop. Another strong partnership allowing local businesses to support each other throughout MN and WI. Looking forward to seeing the growth of their business in 2021.



# STIR CONFECTIONS

DENISE METRAS  
NORTHFIELD, MN

Denise owns Stir Confections in Northfield MN and operates the store with her son. They have been in business 1 year. Their business was growing steadily over the year from word of mouth. They are located in a strip mall and the majority of their business is walk-in customers who come to browse product, purchase, and leave. They have approximately 20% preorder and no online ordering capability set up, but were not needing to promote either of these. They make specialty popcorn, desserts, cookies, and gelato.

Once COVID arrived, their business was closed for walk-in business for several weeks and they had to adjust to their production and how to market their goods. They run this business with only the 2 of them, so producing the product homemade, packaging product, shipping product, running the store, all operations is difficult with just the 2 of them. They were promoting curbside and pick up and they realize they need to focus more on how to promote their business for free and utilizing facebook more often. They have marketed with the 2 colleges and have begun selling at other stores. They have ideas to sell to companies with baskets for employees, sell to parents for college students on campus, using a cart at events. They are concerned if closed down again with how they are going to have a streamlined process to continue sales without walk in traffic.

Building Connections Group is giving Stir Confections funds to create a holiday package to drive in more sales over the next 2 months and also gain a more loyal customer base for future. They already experienced that popcorn tins worked last holiday season so they are prepared to do that this year. They will promote on facebook and through free community advertising. Her promotion will be to buy 2 of the \$20 size or 2 of the \$35 size and receive a gift card of \$10 or \$20 respectively for future purchase. She will offer to her first 25 customers to create a sense of urgency. This holiday promotion will drive in \$2k+ of sales. We connected Denise to other retail businesses throughout the state to sell her products. Another profitable revenue stream she has created for future sales. This is very exciting to see her generate more business through the holidays and new years and continue to increase her profit!





# CHUCKERS BOWL AND LOUNGE

HOLLY SCHELLBACH  
RUSH CITY, MN

Holly Schellbach owns Chucker's Bowl and Lounge in Rush City, MN with her husband. They also own an auto mechanic shop in town. They are very involved in the community and began the bowling alley in 2008. This was always a dream of her husbands to own a local bowling alley in their town. They have had a fully operating business with full leagues, banquets in the event center, host summer events, have many fundraisers, hold reunions, and birthday parties. It has been a successful business and they are loved by the people in the area.

Once the pandemic arrived, Chucker's Bowl and Lounge was shut down and they lost months of income. They had many cancellations of future events which caused a loss of \$30k. Once they were able to open, it was very difficult for them to bring the regular business back into the bowling alley. They have had to learn new ways of generating income. Their focus has been on cleanliness and sanitizing everything so customers feel comfortable. She is looking at alternative ways to advertise, using her space effectively with the large banquet room, and figuring out what food is best for what events to cut costs and waste.

Building Connections Group is giving Chucker's Bowl funds to be used to promote a holiday gift package to drive business into the alley. She is designing a family fun package and a festive friend package that will include several of their product/services such as family of five receive 1 lanes and 2 games of bowling, shoes for each family member, pop beverage for each for \$40 and receive a pizza for free. This promotion will bring them \$2k+. It will be fun to see the promotion bring in more people to the bowling alley and have some fun over the holidays.



# THE GREENSTED

JAYNE BREDLAU  
ZUMBROTA, MN

Jayne Bredlau owns and operates The GREENSTED Regenerative Project along with her husband Dean, in Zumbrota MN. Her business focuses on year-round growing microgreens and selling them as a locally grown, ready to eat, fresh vegetable product used to enhance the flavor and nutrition of every day foods people already enjoy – salads, sandwiches, entrees, and similar. In 2017, after approaching an executive chef with her product, a small business was germinated. She and Dean started selling primarily at farmers markets the summer of 2018. They have expanded to grocery stores in the Twin Cities, Hy-Vee, Kowalski's Markets, Festival Foods and Lunds & Byerlys stores..

Like all small businesses, the pandemic has made it very challenging to continue to sell their products through the usual sales techniques (primarily sampling and store demonstrations) business expansion was halted. She had to pivot her business and figure out maintaining current accounts while planning the next steps of growth. First she spiffed up their website and online store site that offered no-contact farm pick up, augmented social media presence and began networking with other small business owners, which became key to finding innovative ways to keep going. Grocery customers shifted to online shopping, and it took months of persistence to get microgreens available online. This summer The GREENSTED added selling fresh garden produce in addition to microgreens at area farmers markets. Now they are outgrowing their space and will be building on acreage in the area. This custom built facility is opening up opportunities for a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program for both microgreens and vegetables to launch next summer. Rather than using cardboard or plastic boxes for the weekly CSA shares, Jayne wants to use wooden crates branded with their logo. She has partnered with a local craftsman who will build and brand the crates, in two sizes. Community collaboration is at the heart of everything The GREENSTED does.

Building Connections Group is giving Jayne funds for 60 crates, in two sizes to be built with reclaimed lumber in time for the 2021 CSA season. They will be sustainable for many years beyond. CSA members will be issued their crate for the season, to fill with each week's CSA offerings. This will eliminate waste from cardboard or plastic boxes, and keep cross-contamination to a minimum, each person using their own crate. It's also labor saving for The GREENSTED to not spend time packing boxes and delivering. She will have the crates branded with her logo, BCG, and Unity Bank logo. By end of 2020, the small farm business will have 60 accounts. Woman-owned, employing two women full time, they have great future potential. We are excited to see the growth of this small business and happy to be able to help with the crate project.



The  
**GREENSTED**<sup>®</sup>  
regenerative project

Sustain. Regenerate. Connect.





# TILION BREWING

CHRIS LARSON  
CANNON FALLS, MN

Chris is the CEO and Head of Brewing Operations of Tilion Brewery and owns and operates this brewery in Cannon Falls, just 30 minutes south of the Twin Cities with 2 other owners. He and his business partners started their brewery in March of 2018 and grew the business for the next 2 years successfully. Chris lives in St. Paul with his family.

Tilion Brewing was shut down due to the pandemic in March of 2020. During the closed door period, they focused on beer to-go with their loyal customers. When they reopened they were able to revive business at limited capacity and outside sales due to the bike tourists and water sports activities in the area. Now with winter coming they need to be creative. Chris and his co owners have been looking at their distribution channels with liquor stores, restaurants, they are reviewing their record sales in Q1 and where that business came from, food trucks, 10 gallon kegs infused specials, live music and entertainment, firepits, patio usage, etc. They know they have to run at limited capacity and will fully use the warehouse space to social distance. They can use the space outside with the city granting them permission as well. They thought about a heated tent however they do not feel that would abide by the guidelines and safety rules around COVID.

Building Connections Group is giving Tilion Brewery funds for an igloo dome to use outside which can seat groups up to 8 people in a heated area and allow them to drink and eat, enjoying an incredible experience outside in the winter. They can reserve this daily on the hour and charge for the space. This will bring in extra seating capacity for them through the winter bringing in more sales, people will drive to their brewery for the experience, in addition to the extra beer sales, Tilion will make an extra revenue stream by customers reserving the igloo. They will have fire pits, could have live music on nice days, will work with local businesses for food delivery options, will advertise all over to drive biz in from twin cities, may have a pig roast event, flight tasting events, winterfest fun events with outdoor activities, smores, cornhole, etc.... We are excited for them to have this creative alternative and grow their business through this winter season.



# FROM HAIR TO THERE

TAMI ALTRICHTHER  
PILLAGER, MN

Tami owns and operates the one chair salon in Pillager, MN and is well known throughout her community. She has always maintained a solid loyal client base. She loves what she does and her passion is with helping people feel better throughout her area.

She was shut down in March 2020 from COVID for 11 weeks. She reopened June 1st with slower turn around time between appointments due to restrictions, cleaning, and social distancing. She also has been slow to regain customers with their hesitation on going out for services and feeling safe in this new environment. She has a suite within her salon she has been hoping to occupy with a passionate independent contractor. Trust is very important to her based on past experiences and the suite can only hold specific services like massage therapy, sauna room, relaxation area, or gift shop due there is no plumbing in that room. She has pivoted her business by using social media, providing specials, has advertised to entice other entrepreneurs to rent her space, she has surveyed customers on what services they want and will pay for, and is very open to ideas. She is truly pivoting her business and will be generating a new income stream.

Building Connections Group will be giving Tami funds for her business to grow. She discovered through her advertising efforts an excited and eager massage therapist to rent her space with a 6 month lease. Very exciting news to drive in a new income stream. She also uncovered that a salon in a neighboring town is closing down and selling their equipment and furniture. She can get a manicure/pedicure/massage throne with no plumbing needed. This is another new service that will generate thousands of dollars in income for her. She feels she can market to current customers, the new massage customers, through social media, word of mouth, referrals, gift cards and promotions of her new service through the holidays. She is offering several promotions through the holiday season and will target any gift givers and personal needs. She also feels this will prolong her career with different work and what her body will need.



# GAVIN WARD PHOTOGRAPHY

GAVIN WARD  
RED LAKE FALLS, MN

Gavin and his wife Sara are both photographers, moved to Red Lake Falls from Grand Forks over a year ago. He takes professional senior pictures, she does newborns, and they both do weddings. They have branched out and will photograph family pics, headshots, some business commercial space. They feel distance is never an issue when providing their service but now living in the northern part of the state with a young family that limits him a little in attracting business. They market their photography through social media and word of mouth. They were really growing fast, invested in renovating their new studio space in Red lake Falls on main street, committing to the downtown upgrade and their lives in northern MN when the pandemic hit.

COVID-19 forced their business closed and it was shut down. They had 9 booked weddings cancel, they were told to have no client contact since they were not considered essential, and had immediate loss of income. They had to continue to pay for the lease and expenses. Gavin took another job immediately in a town 30 minutes away working FT, odd hours, to support his family. He and his wife have 2 boys with a baby on the way at the time this happened. Gavin shared his need for new products in his studio, albums, photo books, etc; new equipment upgrade, lens for camera; new materials for photo shoots, furniture, backdrops, etc; also looking to invest in AC unit in his studio. Gavin also informed us of his Ambassador Program. This spoke loudly to us and we saw the need and the opportunity. We discussed the opportunity to roll out the Ambassador program with businesses to generate more revenue and create a new income stream. This would also spread his name across the states with his photos hanging, posted in social media, shared on websites, and possibly drive future business for him. This will also benefit the businesses giving them professional photographs to use to promote their business on their website, social media, in house, newsletters, articles, etc.

Building Connections Group is giving funds to Gavin to expand the Ambassador Program. He will be providing a photo shoot to 3 businesses around Minnesota and showcasing their products and business. This will help other businesses with their marketing presence, build stronger communities, and allow Gavin an opportunity to use this portfolio to gain new income and work with other businesses throughout many regions.





# CT FLORAL

DEBBIE KITCHEN  
AUGUSTA WI

Debbie has owned and operated CT Floral in Augusta Wisconsin for over 30 years. She prides herself on living in a small town, being an important part of this community and owning a small business. Her shop houses beautiful floral arrangements as well as boutique items from local artists. Debbie now must undergo surgery and may be out for 5 months and is making plans to help the business survive these winter months.

She was devastated and so nervous when she heard the news that her business was going to be shut down as non-essential due to the pandemic in March of 2020. Her business's main inventory of flowers and plants has a limited shelf life and she will be losing weekly income with no consistent outgoing sales. She was broken hearted and feeling like she would be out of business as they approached celebrating their 30 years. She knew she had no other option than to create an online presence and drive her sales through online ordering, delivery, and pick up. She knew becoming creative with fresh new ideas had to happen for her business to stay alive. She began promoting gift ideas, package ideas, sharing the love ideas, using social media for holiday gifts and sharing do it at home kits. She had Mother's Day specials, Adopt A Resident special at the nursing home, May Day specials, 4th of July promos, etc. She will continue the partnerships with the grocery store, nursing homes, schools for teachers, tuxedo weddings, funeral home, and also design a membership club.

Building Connections Group is able to provide Debbie funds to create and sell a Petal It Forward promotion which includes buying a bouquet and receiving a bouquet for free to pass forward and give away to someone you care about. Spreading the love and the petals forward! This is a PR event that will share the feel good about her business and promote the holiday season with love which is with flowers. She is also being given assistance with her social media while she is out for a month after surgery to continue the special and create a strong presence for her floral business and boutique items she sells as gifts for the holidays.



# PEPPERED COW

DORI ETHERIDGE

ALBERT LEA, MN

Peppered Cow is owned by Dori Etheridge out of Albert Lea MN. Her food truck business operates in public forums and caters for events, she also makes a splash on social media with her best recipes and hottest cooking / baking tips. She was doing well in business and had built a reputable name for herself around her community.

When the pandemic hit March of 2020, her business was immediately shut down and she was in despair unsure of what the future held. She took a major loss in income from immediate events being cancelled and the possibility of no food sales being offered in the spring/summer months. She had to pivot the ways of conducting business and generating income. She discovered ways to safely serve her food once she was allowed to open again. She had continued marketing her name over social media by promoting her food recipes. She was participating in any local charity events and fundraisers. She found business by catering outdoor company events, reunions, picnics, weddings, parties that still happened socially distancing.

She was named small business of the year through her Local Chamber! Something to be very proud of. She now is heading into the winter months and putting the food truck to bed so has pivoted once again. Dori has set up Christmas gathering events, fundraiser events at the wrestling arena, brewery food sales, special soup in a bread bowl. She has partnered with several businesses in many ways. One business is a mercantile and has a grab n go cooler set up with Dori's food products, soups, salads, and sandwiches. She now has completely pivoted her business for the winter months and is focusing on the sweet side of her business of making pies. She is taking preorders and setting up for pick up the week of Thanksgiving.

Building Connections Group is giving Dori funds to run her holiday promotion and make a profit on her holiday pie sales. Once she marketed her Thanksgiving Pie promotion, she received 84 preorders!! Funds will be used for her supplies to box and tape the pies, new food processor to do pie crusts and new oven racks. As of today, this promotion has already sold out for Thanksgiving and she has already begun booking pies for Christmas and future sales. Super excited for Peppered Cow PIES!





# SUPERIOR THERMOWOOD OF BRAINERD

JOHN BIEGANEK  
PALISADE, MN

John has been President/CEO of Superior Thermowood since 2010 and they are located north of Brainerd in Palisade, MN. They cook wood back to its purest natural state. It is called Thermo-Modification which is chemically free treatment for wood. This wood is water resistant, environmentally friendly, 2 x life span than other wood products, lighter, has an enhanced sound tone, easy to fix, dishwasher safe. The look and feel is beautiful and like no other, very unique. They build decks, floors, siding, cabinets, tables, guitars and more.

They have been impacted by the pandemic in many ways and business slowed down tremendously. They lost major clients. The music sales halted, and big building / spending seemed to be put on hold. They have turned to other avenues to create new revenue streams and learned to pivot their business through COVID. Working with local customers, reaching out to make surfboards, canoe paddles, yard fencing, and custom woodworking. Building Connections Group discussed several connections that we could share with them, through the Amish, building contractors, and other high net worth builders in other states. We discussed using testimonials to create more business, using social media to market their products more, such as Instagram and Facebook, also enhancing their website pictures and info to generate further national interest. In discussion with other businesses a brainstorming idea came up to use cutting boards in their gift kits which we brought back to Thermowood. They could use their repurposed material from the lumber, the Reclaimed Off-Fall, to make cutting boards and sell. A true way to pivot their business and create a new income stream for them.

Building Connections Group is giving Thermowood funds to use to make cutting boards to sell to other small businesses who want them and can sell in their shops or use for their products. They also could use these to market to small boutiques, wineries, cheese factories, and kitchen shops in small communities across MN. They also can create cutting boards in the shape of Minnesota, they can brand themselves, which would sell in these small town shops and promote their business. If they market these with their unique reason to buy, they will generate a new income stream!





# JOYCE DARISAY MASSAGE

JOYCE DARISAY  
PIERZ, MN

Joyce is a massage therapist and rents her office space to conduct her services with her loyal clients in Pierz, MN. Her business was going well, and she had established a strong customer base. She loves helping people feel better and regain activity in their lives. She has relied on word of mouth for her ongoing business in the past because she provided a great service.

Once the pandemic hit in March 2020, she was closed down but continued to pay rent and expenses with no income. She immediately found another job within the pandemic at an essential company and needed to be flexible to survive. Once she could reopen, she has not been able to regain her client hours back to full capacity. Her goal is to rebuild to 5-10 more clients per week. She is contacting each of her past clients, sending cards to reconnect, creating a referral program, needs to develop and utilize her social media, create a basket of gifts for a fundraiser to get her name out in the community. She mentioned her photography she does on the side and her desire to grow that business but unsure how. Now is the time! Time to pivot and create that new income stream.

Building Connections Group is giving Joyce funds for her photography card package which will generate \$5k+ in income. She will use her professional images, have them printed on photo card stock and sell in packages. She will promote this through the holidays for gift items and sell in her studio, online through social media, in local boutique and convenience stores, sell as gifts to clients, use the next door app, sell at local long term assisted living facilities, also partner with the RLF Birding Association in future to continue to bundle and sell. Excited for Joyce and her future business growth!

**A good weekend starts  
with a positive attitude  
and a great massage.**



# THE DANCING HOUSE

MELISSA ROSE  
HUDSON, WI

The Dancing House was created in 2008 inside the home of Melissa Rose. She lives in Hudson Wisconsin, is a single working parent with 5 young children, and is the owner of this dance studio. Business was booming and going really well, she took a line of credit against her home to grow her business, ready to double it with a 3000 sq ft building, had a team of 13 dance teachers, a very successful start to her business.

Then COVID hit the world. She was shut down and quickly pivoted her business to virtual classes. After surveying her customers on what they wanted going forward, she added virtual music lessons, date nights with child care, dance passes, Free Wednesday Wiggle classes for little ones, bring a friend free class, along with her usual marketing herself via facebook, google review, word of mouth. She has a commitment and determination to grow and do well.

Building Connections Group is giving Melissa funds which will be used for her ballet barres. The extra barres will bring her an extra income stream in class membership fees. She is also having a promotion for more membership through the holidays, using some of the funds for giving the first month free if they sign up for a year membership which would in turn bring her thousands in income over the next year from the new members. We are excited for Melissa to generate a new income stream using these funds to grow The Dancing House.



*The Dancing House*

## BALLET

**Wednesdays 6:15-7:15PM**

A ballet class for Teen/Adults who have always wanted to learn this beautiful art form. We will start with a classic barre warmup learning positions and steps while engaging proper alignment. We will add centre floor work which will incorporate turns, jumps, and leaps.

**Wednesday Wiggles**

FREE Music & Movement Class  
for 2-5yrs from 11:30-12:15pm

Class Is On The Last  
Wednesday of the Month

*The Dancing House*

# EAGLE SQUARE CONVENIENCE AND GAS STORE

SHERRIE THOMPSON  
RED LAKE FALLS, MN

Eagle Square is THE convenience store and gas station in this town. This store survives on traffic flowing in and out of the small community and the tourists that head up north for the outdoor fun and the travel to Canada. Sherrie is the proud owner of this store for many years and is very involved in this vibrant community.

The state of MN shut down many businesses in March of 2020. Sherrie has never experienced anything like what the store has gone through with this pandemic. This business was an essential business so needed to stay open to serve. People were mandated to stay at home and Eagle Square lost a lot of business. The gas sales plummeted because no one was travelling anywhere for weeks and this continued with limited tourists coming up north. Her inside sales were down because people were scared to come inside. She struggled to keep her employees on staff. She needed to take all precautions to keep her employees and her customers safe. She had to figure out new streams of income to ensure the business was able to stay afloat. Sherrie created and marketed food, bakery, beverage specials on a daily basis and began utilizing Facebook to promote her products and drive in business. She began partnering with local businesses to sell their items through her store to generate more sales. She reached out to the schools, local businesses, nursing homes, food trucks to offer specials and run events. Sherrie redesigned the configuration of her store to increase sales of certain products and connected with many businesses to create a nature section in her store to promote the international bird watching association.

Building Connections is giving Sherrie funds for a professional photo shoot from a local photographer to enhance the look and feel of her store and create a strong welcoming desirable image that will help her market new business and brand her presence in the community. She is also being given assistance with her social media to reach more people, network further, spread her new products and daily specials into a larger market and surrounding areas, and circulate a stronger buzz around her store. We are excited to see Sherrie's store sales grow due to the strong solid presence she will continue to build on with these marketing efforts.

