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Local business owner enjoys over a decade of success

Scrapbooks Mega Meet owner, Kate Griswold, built business from hobby.

Novi, MI –March 15, 2010 – It's no secret that Michigan residents are feeling the hurt of difficult economic times. As a result, many have chosen to take hold of their future and opted to start their own business. Four years ago, self-employment in Michigan had reached 480,000. Those numbers have continued to rise.* It's no surprise that as people struggle to find employment through large corporations, they're instead turning to self-employment opportunities.

For Kate Griswold it was the right time, the right industry, some creative thinking and many hours of hard work – but that recipe has paid off. It's been over 10 years since she introduced Michigan residents to the Great Lakes Mega Meet scrapbooking convention. Griswold and her convention and retreat guests are still celebrating the success of [Scrapbooks Mega Meet](#). The company provides scrapbookers with an [annual convention](#) and several [scrapbooking retreats](#).

"I love bringing so many people together in pursuit of a hobby that is so life-altering," Griswold said. "Scrapbooking is not just slapping photos in an album – it's telling your story and letting a little (or a lot) of your artist through on your pages. I enjoy seeing new products, meeting so many gifted and giving people in the industry and I truly enjoy the people that I work with... and working past lunch in my PJ's and slippers is pretty cool too!"

But 12 years ago the Madison Heights resident never would have expected she'd be responsible for the most exciting scrapbooking event in Michigan. Now celebrating 11 years, the Great Lakes Mega Meet brings the latest scrapbooking ideas and techniques to nearly 9,000 scrappers throughout the state each year.

With a B.A. in English and Communications from Oakland University, Griswold had found success in a marketing job that she held for 15 years. Later, Griswold found success online as well, with her Web design company Kaleidoscope Concepts. But after the birth of her second daughter, Griswold discovered a hobby that would change the course of her life.

"I began scrapbooking after the birth of my daughter in 1995," Griswold said. "It was an at-home party. I found that I loved seeing my husband and my kids' faces when I show them a completed page. I also scrapbook with the people I love, so it's a fun activity for me."

Griswold may have begun scrapbooking in hopes of create a legacy for her two children, but also found an opportunity to help others create a legacy for their families as well.

"The GLMM and our Mega Retreats provide scrappers with the opportunity to sit down and focus on their hobby," Griswold said. "It's not always easy to find time, so having events dedicated to your favorite craft can be invaluable."

When Griswold began the GLMM it provided guests with classes in the latest techniques, new products and large work spaces for cropping. The event, held each year on Mother's Day weekend (this year May 6-8), quickly became a tradition among Michigan scrappers. It wasn't until seven years ago that Griswold began the Mega Retreats with the help of Cara Baker.

Together Griswold established an intimate, relaxing weekend for scrappers in need of a weekend away to enjoy their favorite hobby.

“Even though I’m ‘working’ at the retreats, I find them a great way to relax and get away,” Baker said. “I’m able to create my pages, chit-chat with new friends, eat all I want and just enjoy the experience.”

Both Griswold and Baker, a mother of four from Midland, Michigan, have found their new careers as opportunities to share with others and provide them with time to spend with their families.

“I think it’s really enhanced my being a stay-at-home mom,” Baker said. “I try to focus on my hobby – not my job. Being at home with the kids give me the opportunity to find more ‘scrapable moments’ as well.”

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EDITORS: Kate Griswold and Cara Baker are available for interviews.

* <http://www.sba.gov/ADVO/research/profiles/07mi.pdf>