



**John and Shelly Schening,  
Owners**

Sammi's Heartfelt Treasures  
25 West 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Erie, PA  
Erie County

**Industry:**  
Art Retail

**Year Founded:**  
2019

**SBDC Assistance:**  
Business plan, forecasting,  
market research, marketing,  
and advice on financing

**Gannon University SBDC**  
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## Bringing Art and Community Together

Many artists are content to create, inspire, and share their passion with the world around them. Shelly Schening was one of those artists for most of her life. In early 2019 she felt that her art and passion could do more for those in need, especially for those living with mental disorders. Soon a plan was formed to take art to the community while creating a space that would be a safe harbor for those in need.

After working with the Gannon University Small Business Development Center Sammi's Heartfelt Treasures came into focus. The duo met with business consultants Tom Benson and Jacob Jones to figure out their path forward. Over the next few months they attend the SBDC's First Step Seminar to learn the best practices and key knowledge to start, grow, and prosper. Working with the consultants guided them through business planning, vendor contracts, legal filings, marketing assistance, and so much more.

With her decades of experience Shelly wanted to show off not only her work but others. Sammi's Heartfelt Treasures offers handmade high quality art, décor, and apparel. The business aims to bring artists together with the Erie community. However selling art is just one side of the Sammi's Heartfelt Treasures as Shelly says, "The goal of the business is to provide a safe place for individuals suffering from depression and other higher functioning mental illness to socialize with others and work on crafts." Shelly plans to offer classes on crafting, art design, and group sessions to help others with similar issues overcome their fears.

Sammi's was able to secure space in downtown Erie in an historic jewelry store which over the course of two months the Schening's turned into a homey space. With the help of the Gannon University SBDC a grand opening was held on November 15<sup>th</sup> to celebrate another start in the community.