



News Release

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SBA'S West Virginia 2014 Young Entrepreneur Utilizes SBDC to Expand Dance Studio

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA – You may have heard the quote, “When you dance to your own rhythm, life taps its toes to your beat.” Bridget Rowsey, owner of Bridget’s Dance Academy, finds this rings true in her personal and professional life - especially after recently receiving the coveted Small Business Administration’s West Virginia 2014 Young Entrepreneur award.

With over 15 years of dance experience, Rowsey knew she wanted to make a career out of her passion. After receiving a degree in Business Management, a Minor in Economics, and a Minor in Dance from Marshall University, Rowsey was ready to make her dream a reality.



At the age of 23, Rowsey began Bridget’s Dance Academy (BDA) in August 2010, by offering various styles of dance to 60 students. In 2011, BDA was training 90 students with 15% of them taking more than one class. 2012 led to a significant increase of students. BDA had an average of 160 students enrolled, with 30% taking multiple classes. Rowsey quickly realized her 2,000 sq. ft. studio with limited parking could no longer house her blossoming small business.

In 2013, Rowsey connected with Amber Wilson, business coach with the Small Business Development Center in Huntington. West Virginia’s Small Business Development Center is funded, in part, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. Wilson helped Rowsey put together a business plan and loan package for financing assistance.

With Rowsey’s hard work and determination, Wilson’s business coaching assistance, and financing from First Sentry Bank and the Banking on Business loan program through Federal Reserve Bank of Pittsburgh, Rowsey was able to lease the former Blockbuster building that had set vacant for several years.

Securing a three-year lease with the option to buy, the building was a perfect fit for the budding entrepreneur, to locate three large dance rooms, a spacious waiting room, retail area, dressing rooms, and office space. Now, Bridget’s Dance Academy has 260 students enrolled, surpassing her projected goal of 200.

Wilson says, “Bridget is a smart, motivated, lovely young lady with great family support. It is because of her hard work Bridget’s Dance Academy has been so successful. I’m happy I was able to be here and available when she needed help.”

“I’m very thankful that I have crossed paths with Amber, the SBDC, and the SBA,” states Rowsey. “The assistance they provide small businesses helped me expand my dance studio and get to where I am today.”

To contact the WWSBDC, call the Business AskMe! Line at 888-982-7232.

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