

Canton Village Quilt Works



Five years ago, Jackie Kunkel started an online quilt shop and today she employs four subcontractors who fill the orders for fabric, quilt kits and supplies. [cvquiltworks.com](#) (Handout)
By THERESA SULLIVAN BARGER

Jackie Kunkel is proof that doing what you love and taking risks pays off. When she left her job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor to stay home when her first child was born 21 years ago, the lifelong sewer took a couple of quilting classes and began quilting for fun. About five years later, she bought a used, long-arm quilter for \$6,000 and started a business selling her services as a quilt finisher. The 10-foot-long sewing machine allows someone to sew together a quilt front, quilt batting and a quilt backing into a finished quilt.

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"It paid for itself within a few months," says Kunkel, who runs her business from her kitchen table and two rooms in her Canton home.

As her children grew, she expanded her business. Five years ago, she started an online quilt shop and today she employs four subcontractors who fill the orders for fabric, quilt kits and supplies.

Kunkel began designing quilts and became certified to sell Judy Niemeyer's quilt patterns and kits, putting together packets with fabric pieces that she feels will complement a Judy Niemeyer quilt design.

Kunkel isn't afraid of taking risks with color, fabrics and designs. As her reputation in the quilting community grew, demand increased for her to teach and lecture. After 12 years of sewing the backs on other people's quilts, she discontinued that part of her business and took on more traveling and lecturing. She teaches in classroom space she rents in a former factory in Winsted and lectures all over the country.

After selling her designs to quilting magazines – which include photos of her finished quilts and instructions – she successfully pitched an idea for a quilting book to a prominent quilt book publisher, Martingale. For the 14-chapter book, scheduled for release in September 2015, she designed and sewed 14 quilts and provided instructions for each.

There's a market for quilt kits, she said, because some people enjoy sewing the quilt but aren't confident in their ability to select fabrics that will work together; with a kit, they know what the quilt will look like before they start.

"Quilting is an act of love and caring," she says.

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