

# Two Mansfield women turn shop owners

## Glee gifts opens in the Roosevelt

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Local shoppers are in for a real treat at glee gifts, a new store in downtown Mansfield.

The store is full of chic, unique, upscale merchandise. It's the kind of a store where you can go in without an idea of what you're looking for and come out with the perfect gift.

The brainchild of Mansfield residents and co-owners Nadine Miller and Ann Foley-Collins, glee gifts is located at 266 North Main Street, on the first floor of the new Roosevelt building. The store will be open six days a week starting tomorrow. It will be closed on Mondays.

Foley-Collins described the merchandise as "fun and eclectic," while Miller said the items are "hip, trendy, whimsical — things you don't find in a mall."

"We want to emphasize that it's all about our customers, and how we can help our customers make memories through a great gift," Foley-Collins said, adding that they want to create relationships with their customers so they can use their buying power to access the perfect gift.

"The gift should be about the person receiving it," Miller added.

The plan is to stay on the cutting edge of trends. Both Miller and Foley-Collins are bubbling over with ideas about how to maintain their stylish atmosphere without letting any merchandise get stale. An example of an idea they have already implemented is "my gleeful wish list," a



PHOTO BY CHARLENE MCNEIL

Ann Foley-Collins, left, and Nadine Miller recently opened a gift shop in downtown Mansfield called glee gifts.

little card which people — wives, for example — can fill out, and their husbands can subsequently visit the store, get the list, and buy the right gift.

Plans for the immediate future also include getting involved with corporate gifting and event planning.

Miller and Foley-Collins have both lived in Mansfield for just over a decade and have been friends for six years. They are both veterans of corporate America, with Miller having worked at Putnam Investments and Foley-Collins at Fidelity. Those financial backgrounds have helped them with the formulation of their business plan.

The two women initially met when their children were in day care together in West Mansfield. Each is the moth-

er of two sons, ages 9 and 11.

They have been exchanging a "gift ball" back and forth for six years, taking turns giving each other small gifts, which they say is a symbol of their friendship and also emblematic of their new business.

The nascent proprietresses decided that they wanted to start a business in Mansfield, one which is downtown and also close to the schools. They enlisted the help of the Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce, and they also spent time interviewing owners of other new businesses in Mansfield.

"We wanted to be one of the sparks that helps to revitalize the downtown area," Foley-Collins said.

Miller and Foley-Collins traveled to New York City to attend the International Gift Show, where they stayed for six days. They walked every booth searching for the right gifts for their store.

"We went through everything, asking ourselves 'is this gleeful? Is this the look and feel we want for our store?'" Miller recalled. "We want glee gifts to be a destination" for shoppers.

They came home from the gift show with 50 pounds of catalogs, and from that trip, chose the merchandise which is now stocking the store. They plan to add and change merchandise on a regular basis, to stay on the cutting edge.

How did they choose the name glee gifts? They explained that they took a big sheet of paper and wrote down every name that they had ever come up with. Andrew Hobby, a graphic designer and friend, helped as well. The name glee gifts was the best fit for their store, they decided.