

# Mansfield women turn shop owners

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ocal shoppers are in for a real treat at glee gifts, a new store in downtown Mansfield which is having its grand opening tomorrow.

The store is full of unique, upscale merchandise. It's the kind of a place where you can go in with 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 10 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 store is "hip, trendy, whimsical — things you don't find elsewhere."

"We want to emphasize that we care about our customers, and now 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 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 In-



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**Pictured is a sample of the gifts available at glee gifts in the new Roosevelt building in downtown Mansfield.**

vestments 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 mother 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

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?'"

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, the



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**Gifts owners Ann Foley-Collins (left) and Nadine Miller. The store is located on the first floor of the Roosevelt Building, held its**