

# The TIMES

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## Come for the shopping ... stay for the stories

### Women's EXPO returns to Middle Country Library on Thursday, Oct. 4

BY DONNA NEWMAN

A dozen years have passed since the first Women's EXPO at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach. The number of women entrepreneurs exhibiting has grown, as has the number of attendees and library services available to women establishing businesses. By any measure, the Women's EXPO, a creation of the Middle Country Library Foundation in partnership with the Long Island Fund for Women & Girls, has accomplished all it set out to do — and more. Last year, the EXPO drew 2,000 visitors. This year, they hope to use social media to attract even more. So look for "Women's EXPO LI" on Facebook and share it.

For a single day — Thursday, Oct. 4 from 11 am to 6 pm — the library will be transformed into a showcase and marketplace for Long Island women entrepreneurs: artisans, importers, designers and distributors of products such as jewelry, clothing, fine art and crafts, pottery, children's items, specialty foods, home accessories, paper products and more. "EXPO has grown from a small show to a highly anticipated event, with many attendees returning every year, eager to see their favorite vendors and meet new ones," said event coordinator Elizabeth Malafi.

"It's such a fun day," added MCPL assistant director Sophia Serlis-McPhillips. "The energy, the camaraderie among the exhibitors and the shoppers and the many volunteers who make the day run so smoothly is terrific. We're thrilled that the EXPO has kept its momentum." As in the past, the biggest draw of the day is the remarkable women attendees will meet. For many of these women, their business ventures represent a new direction. For some, it's the fulfillment

of a lifelong dream. For most, it's a path to economic independence and security.

**Liz Glasgow**

Liz Glasgow was an architectural photographer for three decades until the economy soured and the building industry tanked. "I had a lot of time on my hands," she said. Glasgow's mother was fashion illustrator Hilda Glasgow, whose drawings adorned the pages of Vogue and luxury catalogs from the 1940s through the 1970s. Hidden away for decades, Hilda's original drawings gave her daughter an idea. She would photograph the drawings and share her mother's talent with the world.

Beginning with prints of excellent quality, Liz found a market. She decided to make more affordable items, so note cards came next. When she exhibited at the EXPO last year, she was "pleasantly surprised," making sales and connections. "It was a nice boost," she said. "The younger kids think Mom's drawings are cool. They watch 'Mad Men' on television. My generation loves retro stuff — it's nostalgic. And then there are the women who actually wore those clothes. One 80-year-old said to me, 'I owned that dress!'"

Two years after she launched The White Cabinet (the storage place of the drawings and, thus, the name of her business) her mother's art is for sale in nearly 50 stores nationwide, and in England and Japan. The line now includes stamps and gift wrap, mirrors, magnets and mugs. "What started as a labor of love," Glasgow said, "has turned into something pretty cool." She's developing new skills, traveling for business and enjoying the ride. With pride, she added, "My doing this has inspired some of my friends to try new things."

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Photo from the Middle Country Library

Marlene Feehan and Sara Fade, MCPL; Anne Marie Esposito, Sparklefly Candle; Liz Glasgow, The White Cabinet; Carol Curtis, MCPL; Alicia Randolph, Pandora's Products; Diane and Kaitlin Falvey, Iris & Lily.



## Women's Expo

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### Anne Marie Esposito

Anne Marie Esposito's first attempt at creating a candle business 12 years ago didn't pan out. "We had a great product," she said. "We just didn't know how to market it." But she continued creating scented candles as life intervened — marriage, a family and a job kept her busy. The dream remained. The Sparklefly Candle Company was launched last October with the help of supportive family and friends. The company name represents Esposito's desire to "spark something" in her customers — "be it creativity or emotion or generosity ... or responsibility," she said. Recycled product containers get customers a 10 percent discount on refills. The tumblers can also be repurposed in a variety of clever ways.

"That I was chosen to be a vendor is very exciting," said Esposito. "I'm looking forward to meeting other small business owners, learning from and supporting them."

Esposito started out with home parties and a virtual store on the online shopping site Etsy. She really loves customizing candles for just the right touch. One idea is to create favors with custom scent, color and embellishments. So now she sells through the online wedding site [www.theknot.com](http://www.theknot.com).

Her candles come in a variety of sizes and scents, and there are also sparkle stones and reed diffusers, which provide flameless alternatives. "My products can help people

create something magical in their own homes. They go with everything — fit any style — add beauty and fragrance." Maybe most important to her is the example she's setting for her children. "I want them to go after their dreams!"

### Diane and Kaitlin Falvey

Diane and Kaitlin Falvey, a mother and daughter team, have turned Diane's long-time crafting hobby into a clever new endeavor: Iris & Lily — handmade tech cases, albums and books. A year ago, shortly after they began selling handmade cases for tablets, eReaders and iPhones on Etsy, they had so much business that Kaitlin quit her day job. "It's really fun for us to be able to express our creativity this way and have outlets where we can show our work and see the reaction. It's much more than a business. It's such fun and so much a part of us," said Diane.

All of their designs are original — they use no patterns. Despite their very different tastes, they say they work really well together, brainstorming ideas and improving products. "I'm old — she's young," Diane pointed out, "but we've learned to trust each other's instincts and perspectives. Between us we come up with some really good stuff." Through their virtual store they fill orders globally.

"My favorite part is sending custom orders," said Kaitlin. "It's fun to do something for one person, that they're going to receive and know they're going to love it." To which Diane quickly adds, "And come back for

more!" With a focus on customer service, the pair tries very hard to make sure customers get the products they want — and are happy with what they get. That requires keeping up to date. The morning after the iPhone 5 went on sale, their cases for the latest model were prominently featured on their Etsy site.

### Alicia Randolph

Shortly after Alicia Randolph moved to New York from her native Florida, she met a spiritual mentor who guided her "down a path of energy, healing, herbal wisdom" and taught her how to include this in everyday life. Thus began, as she put it, "a never-ending quest for balance and homeostasis," both in her own life and, eventually, helping others find it, too. Randolph is a Usui Reiki Master, and has earned certification in aroma, crystal and chakra therapies. She turned a love of food and experimentation into a catering business. Her raw, vegan delicacies are currently sold in two Long Island locations.

In 2009, Randolph founded Pandora's Products, skin care items that use only natural, fresh, essential oils and are sold in environmentally friendly recyclable packages. As her website declares, "The actual crux of Pandora's Products is natural and organic salves, massage oils, tattoo ointments, bath salts, etc. Not such a bad gig, doing what you love ... and yes, I'm still finding more and more ways to heal. So please join me on the journey, in any way you can." Her journey officially became a voyage for two, with



Photo from the MCPL

Liz Glasgow and some of the items she created using her mother's artwork.

nuptials on Sept. 22.

Women's EXPO will be held at the Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centereach. Admission to the EXPO is free, but it is hoped that guests will purchase raffle tickets to put in contention for the gifts of their choice. Proceeds from the raffle go to the Miller Business Center, which offers support services to the community. Lunch, catered by Fifth Season of Port Jefferson, is available for purchase at the EXPO Café from 11 am to 3 pm. EXPO attendees can also buy dessert and a cup of Tea at Half-Past Three.

For further information, call the library at 585-9393, ext. 296 or visit [www.womensEXPOli.org](http://www.womensEXPOli.org).