

## Beads N Things is a Pittsford staple

Ernst Lamothe Jr. 3:56 p.m. EST December 31, 2013



(Photo: WILL YURMAN staff  
photographer)

Sheila Grabowski believes you need two things for a successful family business: a sense of humor and a good "partner in crime." She realizes that's easier said than done, which is why she's thankful for her situation.

She and her daughter, Ann Grabowski, have helped Beads 'N Things, 50 State St., remain a staple in the village of Pittsford for many years. The store itself is celebrating its 45th anniversary this year. "I'm so glad that I took a chance on myself and this business. I knew I wanted something of my own," said Grabowski.

Beads 'N Things was first established in 1968. Grabowski decided to purchase the shop in 1984, seeing it as an opportunity she didn't want to miss out on.

She focused mostly on beads and crafts in the beginning, but in 1995, she converted the shop back to its origins: full-service beads. She continued to expand throughout the next decade, stocking a selection of beads from across the United States and around the world, including Japanese and Czech glass seed and bugle beads, Swarovski crystals and rhinestones and German glass beads.

But the best change was bringing in her daughter five years ago.

"When Ann was working in the corporate world, she used to come into the shop and notice that I was smiling all the time. Then she told me she wasn't smiling all the time at work," said Grabowski. "She joined me for a trial period and then it took off, and now she loves being here."

She said it's wonderful to combine a 60-something woman with her 30-something daughter to handle customers, travel throughout the East Coast looking at beads and simply spend quality time together.

"Ladies who are younger gravitate to Ann, and those who are older come to me. Together, we can take care of everyone," said Grabowski. "She puts everything on a spreadsheet and is always using the Internet, and I like looking through catalogs still. I think customers can feel our camaraderie.

"We have a very good time and we try to make people feel comfortable. Beading is a great hobby, and that is what keeps people coming back over and over."

Since they have been in business for so long, they are seeing several generations of families coming through their door. Back in the 1980s, teenage girls would ride their bicycles to the shop. In the 1990s, as adults, they would bring their daughters in. And today, some of those original girls now bring their grandchildren to the shop. "It really contributes to the family atmosphere of our wonderful bead shop," she said. "Everyone knows the little bead shop in Pittsford."

*Lamothe is a freelance writer from Rochester.*