

Press Release

November 4, 2013

BCCC's Small Business Center helps Inner Banks Music Academy succeed

After a 30-year career as a music teacher in the public school system, Neva Cashion decided it was time for a change.

Her first thought was to take an entirely new path. So she applied for a job as an appointments secretary at a Greenville medical practice. But a question she was asked during the interview - "Why do you want to work here?" - led Cashion to rethink her decision.

"I realized that I had not lost my passion for teaching music," she said.

Instead, she and her husband, Tim, decided to open their own business, Inner Banks Music Academy. There Neva Cashion could teach voice and piano to individuals and groups of students just as she had done for 30+ years. But this time, she could establish her own curriculum, set her own schedule and be her own boss.

As the Cashions developed a plan for their new business, they began to seek out experts in the community who could help them implement that plan.

And one of those they turned to for help was Lentz Stowe, director of the Small Business Center at Beaufort County Community College.

As part of a statewide network of centers, the Small Business Center (SBC) at BCCC helps the over 1,700 small businesses in Beaufort, Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington counties survive, prosper, and contribute to the economic well-being of the area, according to Stowe.

Small Business Centers provide seminars and workshops, one-on-one counseling, a library of resources, and referrals to other sources to prospective and current owners and operators of small businesses at no cost to clients and attendees.

"When Neva and Tim came to the Small Business Center, they had more than a start at a good business plan," said Stowe. "And knowing Neva's reputation in the community, it was hard for me to contain my enthusiasm for her project."

During her tenure at P.S. Jones Middle School, Cashion had produced junior versions of several popular Broadway musicals and, in doing so, she gained a following.

"There are a lot of children who have attended public schools in Beaufort County and were taught by Neva," Stowe said. "She is an icon among the music and theater students as well as their parents and guardians."

Among the advice Stowe offered the Cashions was the marketing of "her brand" - in other words, her reputation in the community.

He also worked to match available experts with the Cashions through workshops and one-on-one counseling.

“I like to think that when they work with the SBC, prospective and existing small business owners save time and, in business, we all know that time is money,” he said.

Inner Banks Music Academy offers classes Monday through Friday for individuals and groups in the afternoons and early evenings and gives students the chance to make up missed classes on some Saturdays.

The academy held its first recital earlier this year and plans to hold a Christmas-themed recital on Saturday, Dec. 14. Musical theater and show choir camps are planned for the summer.

“I appreciate what the college has done,” said Neva Cashion. “This has become my dream job.”

For more information about BCCC’s Business and Industry Services, including seminars for business owners or potential business owners, contact Stowe at 252-940-6306 or by email at lentzs@beaufortccc.edu or Lauren Spruill at 252-940-6311 or laurens@beaufortccc.edu . Information about upcoming workshops is available on the BCCC website at <http://www.beaufortccc.edu/coned/Small%20Business/workshops.htm> .