



ElginCounty

Progressive by Nature

e-Newsletter • February 2015

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Business Profile

Blackcat Concepts - A One-Stop-Shop For Graphic Design

Lynnsey Gheysen graduated from Fanshawe College's Graphic Design Program in 2005. She went on to work several graphic design jobs but never felt that her creative talents were being put to good use. Feeling the need for more of a creative outlet, Gheysen and then boyfriend David Murray (also a graphic design graduate) started a part-time graphic design business. In 2008, with guidance from the Elgin Business Resource Centre, Gheysen decided to take a leap of faith and leave her job to pursue her own business full-time. Gheysen and Murray are now married and run Blackcat Concepts (www.blackcatconcepts.ca) full-time, out of their office in Aylmer, ON. They started out slowly building their clientele, relying on word of mouth advertising from satisfied customers and their business has been growing ever since.

"We hope that our work has always spoken for itself. We have strong communication skills, great time management and we will always give

you an amazing product at a reasonable price," said Gheysen.

Blackcat Concepts is skilled in a range of graphic design work including logo design, branding and the design of print materials. They offer printing services as well to save clients the trouble of



BLACKCAT CONCEPTS

searching for a printer and arranging for delivery. They are also skilled web designers who will create and build websites for their clients and offer a full package that includes regular

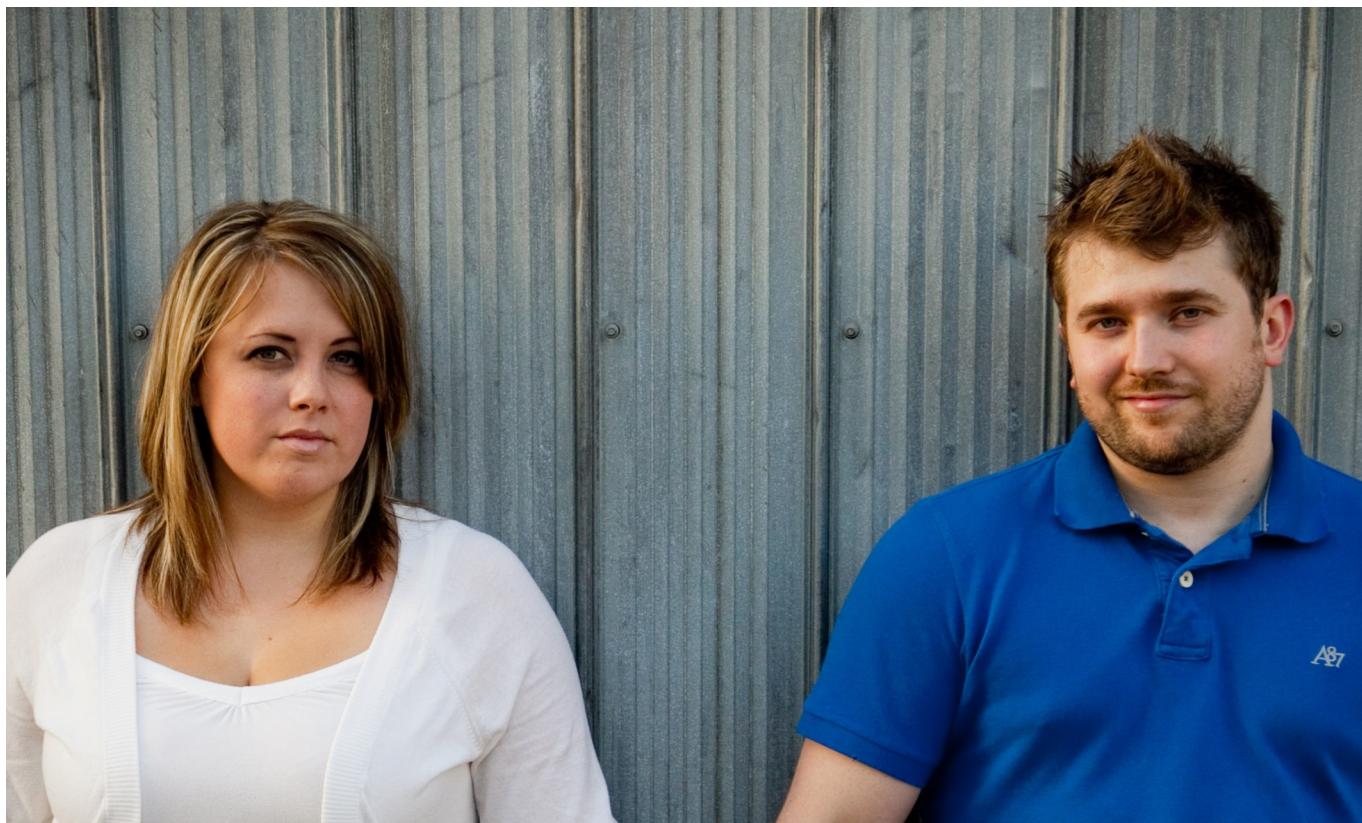
maintenance, domain registration and hosting services. The business has recently begun to offer 3D drawing services to clients who need realistic renderings of CAD files, floor plans or 2D photographs. This has been particularly useful for engineers and those in the home-building industry.

"Blackcat Concepts strives to be a one-stop-shop for our clients," said Gheysen. "If you are a new or existing business we can take you from branding to advertising, get everything printed for you, design and maintain your website. We want to save you the headache of going to many different companies."

Blackcat Concepts loves doing business in Aylmer because of the connections and bonds

that are formed in a small, tight-knit community. Small businesses help one another to be successful through networking and referrals. Gheysen and Murray also work to provide advice to the Elgin County business community through the Elgin Business Resource Centre and the Small Business Enterprise Centre and have recently become active members of the Aylmer and Area Chamber of Commerce.

"New businesses need an online presence and we want to help people in the community who are just starting out because we remember what it's like to be new," said Gheysen.



Lynnsey Gheysen and David Murray, Owners of Blackcat Concepts in Aylmer.

Shop Local

Elgin County Valentine's Day Gift Guide

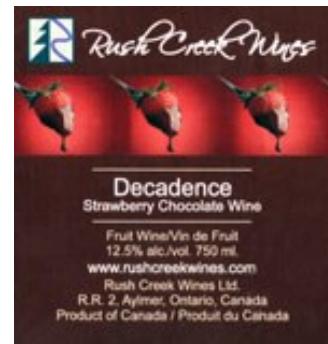


Valentine's Day is just around the corner and buying a gift from a local business is a great way to show that special someone in your life that you appreciate them while supporting Elgin's business community at the same time.

Decadence Wine

Rush Creek Wines, Malahide

The sweet flavours of Ontario grown strawberries mix with the rich flavours of chocolate in this delightfully decadent wine from Rush Creek Wines. Serve this wine chilled with dessert for a treat on Valentine's Day.



Spa Treatment

Posh in the Port, Port Stanley

Get ready for a night on the town or treat your loved one to a bit of pampering at Posh in the Port.

Cinnamon Hearts Candle

Sparta Country Candles, Sparta

Cast a romantic glow with this hand crafted candle made right here in Elgin County.



A Gourmet Meal

Savour Elgin Members

Elgin County is home to numerous fine dining establishments serving delicious, gourmet meals made with local ingredients. Take a break from cooking and make a reservation at one of these great Savour Elgin locations.



Organic Herbal Teas

Wildflower's Farm, Union

Warm the heart of your loved one on a cold February day with a unique blend of herbal tea from Wildflower's Farm. Teas are made locally with organic roots, leaves, flowers, barks, and seeds.



Community Resource

Contact North - Upgrade Your Education From Home

Contact North/Contact Nord is a service funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that provides access to online and distance learning programs from Ontario public colleges, universities and literacy and training organizations to residents of 600 small, rural and remote communities across the province.

Contact North first launched in 1986 in Northern Ontario where residents in very isolated communities were in need of post secondary education options. The service then expanded into both eastern and southern Ontario and in 2009 a St. Thomas location, serving all of Elgin County, opened at 400 Talbot St. located inside of the Employment Services Elgin building.

Courses were first provided through audio and video conferencing at Contact North locations; however, technological advances have led them to transition to primarily online offerings. The St. Thomas centre provides exam proctoring services, a free computer centre and assistance with course research, application and registration processes. Contact North staff also offer technical assistance and moral support for online learners.

Online learning has opened up a world of possibilities for Elgin County residents to pursue higher education from the comfort of their own community. The Contact North service is particularly useful for those who work shift work, have young children or simply don't want to choose between the tranquility of a rural lifestyle and upgrading their educations. The popularity of this service has also grown amongst mid-career professionals who want to further their

educations without leaving their current places of employment.

"It is wonderful to be able to help people achieve their goals and see the difference that education can make in their lives," said Laura Sherret, Online Learning Recruitment Officer at Contact North St. Thomas. "This service is helping to build a well educated workforce and keep talent and knowledge in Elgin County."

The Contact North database (www.studyonline.ca) is searchable by topic and has 1,000 online programs and 18,000 individual courses available. The St. Thomas centre sees approximately 1,300 course registrations each year. Staff are available to meet with interested parties to discuss options by appointment at the St. Thomas location or at any convenient location throughout the County.

For more information about the services offered by Contact North or to make an appointment regarding online learning call 1-855-451-7516 or e-mail stthomas@contactnorth.ca.



Laura Sherret, Online Learning Recruitment Officer.

Tourism

Elgin County Tourism at a Glance - February 2015

Grants Available For Local Festivals and Events



Elgin County recognizes that local festivals and events help to shape vibrant communities and contribute to an area's overall quality of place. Elgin is pleased to present the Festival and Event Partnership Program (FEPP) again in 2015 for local groups that take it upon themselves to develop festivals and events that will meet the County's tourism goals:

- Increase the amount of people that visit Elgin;
- Increase the length of stay of visitors; and,
- Increase the amount of money that visitor's spend.

In 2015, the FEPP will provide up to \$4,000 of funding to support several qualifying festivals and events in Elgin County. The FEPP funding will not be limited to a predetermined number of festivals or events or amount per festival or event.

A copy of the FEPP application can be downloaded by visiting: www.elgintourist.com/fepp. Applications must be submitted by **Tuesday April 7, 2015** to qualify.

If you have questions about this program, call the Economic Development Department at (519) 631-1460 ext. 164 or send an e-mail to lduncan@elgin.ca.

County Seeking Tourism Assistants

Elgin County Economic Development is seeking to fill three student positions from May to September 2015. Successful applicants will staff various tourist booths throughout Elgin County providing tourists with information and acting as goodwill ambassadors for Elgin County. This exciting, customer oriented position requires an outgoing and self-motivated personality! Resumes, including a cover letter must be sent to jobs@elgin.ca by no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 2015.

For more information about these positions please see the job posting at <http://www.elgincounty.ca/main-menu/departments/human-resources/employment-volunteering>.

Local Event

Plan Your Summer at the London Boat, Fishing and Outdoor Show



From February 20 – 22, 2015 thousands of visitors will attend southwestern Ontario's largest, most comprehensive boat, fishing and outdoor show at London's Western Fair District. Elgin County Economic Development and Tourism will be exhibiting at the show to promote the Ports of Elgin campaign. Visit the booth for giveaways, draws and a copy of the 2015 Elgin County Visitor's Guide!

With a target audience of 20,000 consumers the show is a perfect opportunity to promote Elgin's four portside villages to the London market. Each of these villages offers visitors a unique and rewarding experience. Port Glasgow in the western portion of the County is home to the Port Glasgow Yacht Club and Marina, the perfect spot to launch or charter a boat or relax on the beach. Port Stanley offers some of the finest beaches on the north shore of Lake Erie and visitors are delighted by the quaint boutiques and fine dining establishments that dot the downtown core. Port Bruce boasts some of the best Lake Erie Yellow Perch and Walleye fishing along Ontario's southern coastline and Port Burwell is home to a provincial park, a historic lighthouse, a wind interpretive centre and the HMCS Ojibwa Submarine.

For more information on the Ports of Elgin or the Elgin County booth at the London Boat, Fishing and Leisure Show visit www.elgintourist.com/ports.

Show Hours:

February 20 noon – 9 p.m.

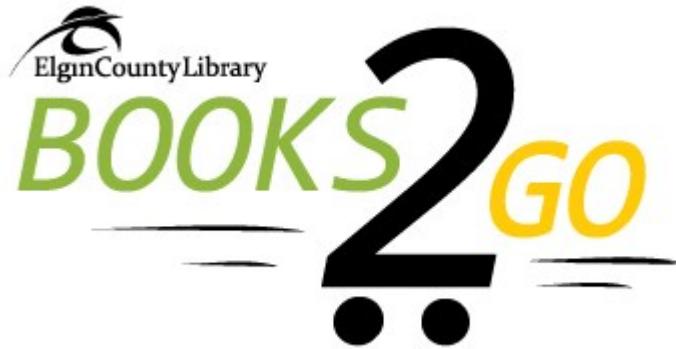
February 21 10am – 7 p.m.

February 22 10am – 5 p.m.



Community Resource

Books 2 GO - A Mobile Library Service for Residents of Western Elgin County



Elgin County Public Library is partnering with the *West Elgin Community Health Centre (WECHC) Support Services* to offer a mobile Library service, “Books 2 GO”, to individuals that are currently part of the WECHC “Friendly Visitor Program”.

Over 130 persons with mobility and transportation challenges currently receive weekly visits from the WECHC program volunteers. These home visits promote healthy communities and help to alleviate loneliness, especially in the winter months. As of March, volunteers will also be able to provide library services to their clients.

Elgin County Library staff at the Rodney, West Lorne, and John Kenneth Galbraith Reference Library – Dutton branches will be working with participants and volunteers to create bags of materials to suit the interests and needs of each participant, in addition to giving them the option of ordering specific materials from the online catalogue. Participants will not only have access to books; but, all Elgin County Library collection items including DVDs, CDs, Playaway Packs, Books on CD, and Magazines.

“We are thrilled to be offering the “Books 2 GO” program,” said Sandra Poczobut, Elgin County

Manager of Programming and Community Development. “Partnering with WECHC has provided us with a unique opportunity to offer a service that directly meets the needs of the communities we serve. We are look forward extending our service to those who would benefit greatly from our collection and resources. We hope in the future to find a similar collaboration in the eastern end of the County.”

The Elgin County Library has many rich online resources. With an Elgin County Library card patrons can stream movies using *IndieFlix*, learn a new language with *Mango Languages*, access e-books using *Overdrive*, and search through numerous databases. Participants of the “Books 2 GO” program with an internet connection at home will also have an opportunity to learn how to access these services.

To find out more please visit <http://www.elgincounty.ca/library>

