

Business Spotlight Saratoga Bridges/Creative Endeavors—Lena Benvenuto/Catherine Spaneas

Saratoga Bridges has been a proud member of the Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association since 2005. Founded in 1953, Saratoga Bridges provides services for people with developmental disabilities and their families, including Day Programs, Supported Employment, Respite and Residential Services. The agency encourages individuals to be active, productive members of their communities. Our Creative Endeavors Gift Shop and Art Center, located on 49 Front Street, is involved in many BSBPA activities. Since opening in 2006, it has provided an integrated



art venue for classes, exhibits, workshops for kids and community members, events and outreach. Through the efforts of many, Creative Endeavors offers our individuals a studio and quality instruction to hone their creative skills and has become a place where collaboration and exploration are embraced. A wide range of classes such as drawing, painting, collage, photography, jewelry making and textiles let individuals develop skills so they can display their work in local and regional art shows. Individuals discover and nurture their artistic talents, increase self-confidence, gain avenues of expression, improve fine and gross motor skills and expand communication skills. It is most apparent how important art is in their lives when they have a chance to talk about their process at shows or when they make a sale. The gallery and Gift Shop display many participants' jewelry, framed prints, original artwork, hand-crafted furniture, seasonal décor and handmade cards -- all at affordable prices. Also located within Creative Endeavors is the Executive Closet, which is a consignment shop that sells business attire and accessories. Individuals from the agency's Day Programs help run both ventures and are responsible for stocking inventory, bookkeeping, customer service and working the register. These experiences give people practical skills they can apply towards competitive employment positions.