

Gift Shop Featuring Local Artists Opens in Williamsburg

arlnow.com/2014/09/15/gift-shop-featuring-local-artists-opens-in-williamsburg/













A new gift shop, [Two the Moon](#), is now open in the Williamsburg Shopping Center (6501 29th Street N.).

Two the Moon opened on Sept. 2 and is owned by Williamsburg resident Johanna Braden. Braden retired earlier this year as an end-of-life specialist with Virginia Hospital Center, where she had worked the past 10 years. She said she retired “for about a half a day, until the house was clean,” before she decided to get to work opening up a gift shop.

“The kids don’t need me anymore, so my husband asked me what I wanted to do,” she said in her Boston accent. “Who asks a 56-year-old woman what she wants to do?”

She said she knew immediately she wanted to open a gift shop in her neighborhood, so she leased the basement space in the strip mall, which had been vacant for seven years since Action Music moved out of the space. It was “in ruins” she said, but in six months she, her family and friends fixed it up and made it ready to use.

Now open, the shop features gifts and wares from about 20 Arlington vendors as well as people from the surrounding area and up and down the East Coast. Braden keeps a book with the stories of each artist or vendor sold in the shop, so she and her employees can give the full story to every customer.

“It’s a fun place,” she said as she waltzed around the store, proudly showing stationery with drawings of Westover landmarks, blankets made from recycled cotton and linens made by a cancer survivor that say “Fork Cancer.” “I think it’s going to be a hit. I really want it to be about community, because I live in the community and I care about the community.”

The store is open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays and closed on Mondays. For one weekend a month, Braden is planning on holding a showcase for an Arlington artist and serving wine and cheese. This past weekend, the artist was [Jessica Lee Designs](#), which specializes in handmade jewelry.