

OXFORD BANK SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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Every local business has a story worth sharing with the community. That is the belief behind Oxford Bank's "Business Spotlight" series – to shine spotlight on all of our favorite local businesses and connect businesses with their surrounding communities.

This month's spotlight is the Orion Art Center, located in Lake Orion, Michigan. I sat down with Director Janice Price and Board Member Alana Hart to get the 'scoop' of the business.

AW: What was the inspiration behind opening the Orion Art Center?

AH: The Orion Art Center was opened in 1979 when a group of artists got together and envisioned an arts and cultural center in northern Oakland County. Almost 40 years later, the art center is now run by Janice. She was an Orion Art Center-nominated *Artist of the Year* in 2017, prior to becoming the new director. She is a painter and dabbles in other art as well. I have a true passion for being involved in the community and truly love what our town has to offer, and that's what brings me here. The Orion Art Center "house" itself was not originally located where it is today; it was picked up and moved in the early 80's to its current location!

JH: I retired after 30 years for GM and have always had a love for painting since a young age. It's an honor to be a 2017 nominated Artist of the Year, as well as take over as the new director.

AW: What products or services do you sell?

AH: The art center features local artists of all backgrounds for different gallery shows. The current gallery we are featuring is titled *Re-Create Recycled Show*, running from now until May 26, with the theme, "United in Patriotism," sponsored by Waste Management. Some of the pieces in the show are currently for sale by the artist themselves. The artists range from being under the age of 10 and up! There is even a local Boy Scout Troop that created a piece featured here.



JP: There is also the newest location added to the Orion Art Center called *Art Studio at Moose Tree*, just a few minutes up the road. Here, locals are able to take in a wide variety of classes ranging from painting, jewelry making, and even pottery with a full process from start to finish. All of these classes can be taken while enjoying the spectacular view into the trails near the famous Lake Orion Moose Tree.

AW: What's the one thing you guys are known for? Why?

AH: The Orion Art Center is known for its community involvement. Dragon on the Lake Festival is our biggest event for the year, and features a full weekend of fun for the whole family! It truly is all about being involved directly with our community, local artists, and businesses. We kick it off on Thursday night with a Foam Party, and wrap up on Sunday with the annual Boat Races.

JP: The gallery is full of professional talent and quality pieces. The artists here in Lake Orion are truly talented, and it's wonderful for people to be able to see their work on display!

AW: What has been the Art Center's proudest moment? Why?

AH: I posed a question on a Chalk Board piece at the Dragon on the Lake Festival last year: What is Art? The response was astounding. Responses were carried off of the board and onto the side walk. There were pictures and words from the community that described what art was to them; it was truly beautiful and what I would deem that as my proudest moment. It gave the true sense of what art is, which is a living piece in which we all envision individually, but can create as a community. Watching people come and truly enjoy themselves, that's what gives me pride.

JP: Being involved with such a wonderful not-for-profit organization, and being able to help artists showcase their work, is a beautiful opportunity.

AW: What has been the Center's biggest risk? What could have gone wrong, and what was the end result?

AH: Having a separate studio a few miles away has been our biggest risk, but also our greatest opportunity for growth. It gives our community a place to take classes and be involved. It's a bit out of the village, so I think that's been our biggest challenge — making sure people know where our art studio is at, and the numerous classes we offer. Our art studio is located at Moose Tree in the Webber Elementary parking lot.

AW: What do you want the community to know about the Art Center?

AH: Get involved. We aren't just a house at the end of the street. Whether it's a piece of art you want to showcase, volunteering at the Dragon on the Lake Festival, through donations, or by taking a class by yourself or with friends. Get involved any feasible way you can. It's appreciated and welcomed!

JP: We can't survive without the support of our local community. We do multiple shows throughout the year, we are involved with a Scholarship Program through the local high schools, and we have so much to offer the community. Being involved with the Orion Art Center is a privilege for me and I want everyone in our community to be able to enjoy what we have to offer.



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If you are interested in taking part in our "Business Spotlight" series, please contact Amanda Wilcox by email at AWilcox@oxfordbank.com