

# BROKEN PLATE HELPS LOCAL ARTIST DISCOVER A TALENT FOR MOSAICS

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Photo provided Hanging in her house, this is one of Nancy Mayhew's favorite mosaic pieces. The piece combines the five natural elements: fire, earth, wood, water and metal.

BELOIT - It all started with broken plate she was able to turn into a cement turtle for her mother-in-law.

Since then, Nancy Mayhew has made thousands of mosaics over the last 12 years.

Mayhew Mosaics operates out of Mayhew's home in Beloit, but she ships her products all over the nation.

"My whole life I've been drawn to mosaics," Mayhew said. "I bought books (on making mosaics), but I didn't think I could do it."

That is until that fateful day when she decided to take a towel and hammer to further smash the broken plate, turning it into her first creation. Her skills have grown considerably over the years.

When Mayhew began creating her works of art friends would ask for them, and she would give them as gifts.

She began selling her products on Wisconsinmade.com, a site for Wisconsin artists. Mayhew then switched to Etsy because it offered a more profitable bottom line. Stateline Area residents have a much closer method of reaching Mayhew - she sets up shop at the Beloit Farmers Market almost every Sunday, across from Bushel and Peck's.

She's been at the Beloit Farmers Market for the past eight years.

On Monday, July 3, Mayhew was getting ready to ship two of her creations to California and one to a customer in Wisconsin.

Mayhew also works as a personal trainer and wellness coordinator in Beloit, teaching Qigong (Cheegong). It is a Chinese tradition believed to relieve stress, increase energy and is focused on breathing.

Her favorite mosaic piece so far has been one involving the five symbols of nature: wood, earth, metal, fire and water.

"All of us have some creativity, and if we express it, it brings us so much joy," Mayhew said. "That's the most peaceful place to be."

Mayhew channeled her sorrow - after losing her sister, mother and niece in a three-year period - into making something productive.

"The most happy and peaceful place is the present, and when you're making something you're in the present," Mayhew said.

When creating her mosaics, Mayhew often will attempt to find items to repurpose that are cheaper, such as looking for costume jewelry at garage sales.

Her items range in price depending on the item. A heart stone would cost \$20, while a mosaic dragonfly would be around \$40. The price could be hundreds of dollars if customers require custom creations.

"I love custom orders. I love it when people give me an idea," Mayhew said.

Currently popular items include cement turtles, dragonflies and memorial pet stones with the animal's face on it.

Mayhew operates her business out of her home, and she has brought her friend, artist Cheryl Kitzman, into the business with her. She also teaches mosaic classes in the spring and fall at the Glass Gardens in Janesville. The fall dates have yet to be announced.

"I don't know if I want (Mayhew Mosaics) any bigger, because it takes away the creativity," Mayhew said.

For now, Mayhew said she loves the combination of having two part-time jobs. For more information on Mayhew Mosaics, call Mayhew at 608-290-9253 or visit her Etsy store at "MayhewMosaics."