Storey fulfills dreams of entrepreneurship

By ANDREW CRITCHELOW THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE
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Lisa Storey plans on launching an online entrepreneurship training course next year, which will teach members how to start a self-storage business.

Submitted

Getting to Know Lisa Storey

Hobbies: Reading, thrifting

Family: Her husband, Jesse, two sons, Spencer and Austin and two grandchildren, Jillian and Spencer Jr.

Pets: Two miniature schnauzers.

Favorite sports figures: NASCAR driver Kyle Busch.

Favorite music: Country.

Favorite television show: "Yellowstone."

Favorite books: "Girl Wash Your Face" by Rachel Hollis and "Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less" by Greg McKeown.

Favorite food: Vanilla scrap cake cups from A Sweet Retreat in Elizabethtown.

Throughout her life, Lisa Storey of Vine Grove has held many different roles, including positions in the fields of health care and education. Now, she is primarily focused on entrepreneurship, a pursuit she has almost always been interested in.

Growing up on a farm in Hart County, Storey said her parents helped her become a self-starter early on.

"My mama always said that I got my entrepreneur spirit from my daddy," she said. "He always said that he was the jack of all trades and master of none. He was always looking for new business opportunities to do as a side job."

Before she became her own boss, Storey began her career in the healthcare industry. She said she is registered as a health information technician through the American Health Information Management Association in Chicago and holds a bachelor's degree in biology with an emphasis on pre-medicine from Western Kentucky University.

Storey later went on to earn a master's degree in middle grade education from WKU and taught at LeGrande Elementary School in Horse Cave from 2002 to 2006 and taught science and math at Central Hardin High School from 2006 to 2010.

For Storey, her passion for education was inspired by a personal encounter she had while studying at WKU. She said she initially struggled in the fields of math and science as a high school student until one particular professor made the material "click" for her.

"It was as if the light bulb suddenly came on and everything made sense," she said. "I wanted to be able to help children understand math and science much better than I did before finding that one professor."

After teaching for several years, Storey went on to earn a master's degree in library media science from WKU and worked as North Park Elementary School's librarian from 2010 to 2014 and as North Park Middle School's librarian from 2014 to 2017.

Storey then pursued her principal certification and ended her career in education while serving as principal for West Point Independent School, a role she took on from 2017 to 2018.

"I wanted to be able to work with parents and the community to make certain that we eliminated all possible obstacles so that our children could be successful," Storey said. "The most rewarding aspect of education is hearing from former students and them saying that I somehow made a difference in their life. "

Storey balanced her work in education with her role as co-owner of local business Vine Grove Storage. She co-founded the business with her husband, Jesse, in 2008 after experiencing difficulties locally in trying to rent a storage unit.

"At that time, I knew that there was a need," she said.

Vine Grove Storage's first facility was built in 2008 and within five years, the business had grown to include five buildings. The business now includes over 200 storage units, including 18 climate-controlled units. An existing storage facility in Irvington was purchased by the business last year.

"One of the rewards is meeting tenants and having a good relationship with them," Storey said of her work. "I have met so many interesting people from all walks of life. I especially feel rewarded when I can help our military families. One of the challenges that I face in the storage business is having to foreclose on a unit for non-payment. I take that very serious and go straight by the books but I find it very difficult to sell people's belongings. "

Storey said several of the skills she picked up on while working in education have carried over into operating a small business.

"Public speaking and good communication skills are used daily," she said. "As a principal, I had to speak to large crowds and also had good relationships with parents and the community. This is important in any business."

In addition to operating Vine Grove Storage, Storey also opened The Carousel Shop in 2018. Initially a brick-and-mortar boutique in downtown Vine Grove, the business later became a mobile boutique after Storey suffered injuries in a serious car accident in December of 2018.

To create a mobile boutique, Storey converted an old airport shuttle bus and would take it to various regional vendor events. However, due to COVID-19, many of these events were cancelled last year and Storey was forced to sell the bus and consign her remaining inventory to an Elizabethtown-based boutique.

Storey said she is looking at ways to reinvigorate The Carousel Shop concept and plans on continuing the business in the future.

Though years of hands-on experience is a great method of learning the intricacies of running a small business, Storey also has some formal training in entrepreneurship. Earlier this year, she took a 12-week course through the CO.STARTERS CORE Program from Shaping Our Appalachian Region Inc.

Storey said she was inspired to take the training due to a recommendation from Lisa Williams, director of the Central Region Innovation and Commercialization Center.

"Although I had already used a lot of the strategies and tools that they offered, the camaraderie of entrepreneurs that I met and worked with was worth its weight in gold," Storey said. "I have life-long friends all over the state that I can utilize for any brainstorming ideas I may have."

Next year, Storey said she plans on launching her own online entrepreneurship training course, which will teach members how to start a self-storage business.

Sharing insights into entrepreneurship is nothing new for Storey. She has been a featured speaker during two entrepreneurial events this year, including an event in the Central Region Innovation and Commercialization Center's StartupGarden series and the Women's Entrepreneur Luncheon, hosted by Vine Grove City Councilwoman Selena Hudson.

"I feel very honored to have been asked to speak at these events," Storey said. "I absolutely love sharing my experiences as an entrepreneur. I feel that I have a lot to offer those who are just starting out. I can share my wins but more importantly, I can share my losses. Sometimes telling entrepreneurs what they should not do is more important than telling them what they should do. I never look at something as a failure, but more as a learning experience."

Storey said for those considering opening a small business, she would advise creating and staying on a budget, establishing long and short-term goals before opening the business, utilizing social media, developing a good working relationship with your lender and always treating the customer the way you would want to be treated.

"I have shared my insight in entrepreneurship with others for a very long time, even before opening Vine Grove Storage," she said. "I have always had a knack for brainstorming new business ventures. It is my love for this that makes me want to share it more and more."

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