

# The Province

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## MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

### Photo images stitched into memory quilt

**Name:** Rita Sheloff.

**Business:** Kootenay Custom Quilting, Coquitlam.

**Contact:** www.kcquilting.com, 604-544-1612.

**Number of employees:** Just me.

**Time in business:** Five years.

**What is your business?** I make custom photo memory quilts using your actual photographs. I print them onto 100-per-cent cotton fabric and sew them into a beautiful quilt that you design with my help. These quilts are a popular way to preserve and celebrate your memories — and can be hung on a wall or used to cuddle up in. I make them in most sizes. They are completely washable.

**How did you get started?** My seven-year-old stepson died in 2004 after being hit by a dump truck while riding his bike. I made what's known as a memory quilt of him for my then fiancé, using photos I printed onto fabric. It was such a hit that other people started asking me to make them one.

When we moved to the Kootenays, I enrolled in a Community Futures program in Nelson to get started making Memory Quilts as a business. Last August, we moved back to Coquitlam.

**What do you like best about your business?** I love creating with my sewing machine. I get to come up with all kinds of wonderful designs for quilts to make my clients' memories extra special for them.

I also get to know my clients a little better through talking to them and seeing their photographs. I'm helping them share their memories with others — and that always makes me feel good.

**How do you market or promote the company?** Mainly through word of mouth. I am big on guerrilla marketing, so I write creative messages with fluorescent markers on my van's windows. The black tint in the windows makes it show up really well.

I also have an e-plate that fits around my license plate, letting me write up to five dif-

ferent messages. As well, I hang up flyers around town and take part in some craft fairs.

**What is your greatest challenge?** My two-year-old daughter! I'd love to sit at my sewing machine all day but she won't give me a lot of time all at once to sit and sew. I have to grab sewing time when I can, such as when she naps for a few hours or watches a movie. I sometimes put her in daycare for a day.

**What's ahead?** I'm expanding into more crafts, such as baby bibs with funny sayings that I machine embroider on them. I'm also making more infant/toddler slippers that I call Cutie Booties. Both have been a hit whenever I set up a booth to sell them.

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Rita Sheloff, owner of Kootenay Custom Quilting in Coquitlam.

— SUBMITTED PHOTO