



Meet Kristina Cummings, distributor of ThirtyOne Gifts...

1. Describe Your Business:

ThirtyOne Gifts is a company that makes personalized purses, totes, thermals, and household items. "What makes it unique is that we can personalize just about every item we sell," Kristina said. "We have icons you can put on if you don't want to personalize with your name or initials. We have baseballs, soccer, owls, and unicorns for the kids right now. Really, anything you can think of we probably have something pretty close."

2. Tell us your story:

"I have always wanted to be a family practice physician," Kristina said. "I knew when I was about thirteen that I wanted to do family practice. I had good experiences growing up with my family practice physicians, and I had really good role models. My mom was a nurse, and my parents were also foster parents. We spent a lot of time going in and out of hospitals, and that gave me a good experience with the medical setting." Kristina said that while she didn't get into medical school right away, she worked hard and persevered. "I probably wasn't the top medical student, but I tried hard and I did well on my rotations where I

did the hands-on work." Kristina said that over the years, medicine has gotten more difficult. "There are more regulations, and insurance companies are getting involved. As a result of that, I wanted an outlet and I thought ThirtyOne would be a good outlet. I had been purchasing products for two or three years. I would buy a couple hundred dollars' worth of products and think 'Why shouldn't I sell this? I might as well profit from what I'm already doing.' Then we got two foster children and realized we could use the extra cash. I also wanted a fun job. Not that being a family physician isn't fun, but I wanted something where I could go hang out with the girls or with a group of ladies and just have a nice evening out," Kristina said.

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

"With my ThirtyOne business, I think just going out and being open and saying 'Hey! Have you ever heard of ThirtyOne?'" Kristina said. "That's a big change for me, because I'm not a pushy person. As a physician, I've got that all down. I know that business. But as a self-employed person, it is a little bit different. Putting myself out there has been a different experience." She added that going to vendor shows and going to some Chamber-sponsored events has also helped her gain experience.

4. What inspires you?

"My kids and husband really inspire me," Kristina said. "I also am a strong believer in the Lord, so God inspires me. I wanted to use my ThirtyOne business to do some charitable things and some fundraisers, and I have been able to do some of that. I have been able to sponsor hygiene kits for the Potter's Hand Ministry. It is a ministry that helps women out of sex trafficking. They have a house in our area, and are starting to work on counseling and vocational training to get women out of sex trafficking. That's a big thing for me. Being able to give women the opportunity to be self-employed and confident, and I feel like that's important. ThirtyOne is a business started by women, and their goal is to celebrate, encourage, and reward women. They also sponsor charities that do that, like Girls on the Run, Girl Talk, and Ronald McDonald House. It's a business all about women, and I think that is really inspiring."

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

"My kids!" Kristina laughed. "Worrying about my kids and if I am doing the right thing with them. Parenting issues, of course." She added that her work as a physician can also keep her up at night. "I think about if I really want to do my job for the next twenty years. Is there something else I could be doing? I think about Watkins Glen and what the town needs that we could do. What can we do to make this town better? I think about that a lot, actually. Because I like this town and I want it to succeed."

6. What is your favorite local activity?

"We like going to the lake and kayaking," Kristina said. "I think that's been our new favorite activity. We bought kayaks last year, so we've been spending a lot more time at the lake." She added that her family also enjoys the annual festivals in the area. "We like Village Christmas the best, but we like all the little festivals."

7. Is there anything else we should know about you?

"Most people don't know that I have a big vegetable garden. I grow the vegetables, and then I can salsa, stewed tomatoes, and fruit," Kristina said. "We have a little homestead with ten chickens, two dogs, and two cats." Kristina added that for many years she thought she would be a missionary. "I never thought I'd be working in New York State, but I love it. We have a pretty poor county, so charity means at home. We have to be creative here with some of our patients."