



## **Meet Riqui Hess, owner of M.R. Hess Home Works...**

### **1. Describe Your Business:**

I find it hard to "nutshell" what we are about, other than by using our mission statement - Empowering Individuals - Strengthening Families - Fostering Community. Right now, we seem to have our hands in a little bit of everything. While our backbone is suicide prevention, and this is currently the topic of our regular events, we have spread that into an "Adopt-a-Grandparent" program and are currently working towards a monthly community event, as well as a few other ideas that we have had recently. The goals of this business are simple: To include everyone. To give everyone a chance. To show everyone that there is compassion. To show everyone that they can find their purpose. To show everyone that they can last another day. To show everyone that they are important. To strengthen relationships, make the individual stronger and foster community.

### **2. Tell us your story:**

I lost my husband to suicide in July of 2017. He struggled with mental illness for most of his adult life, but wasn't in a position to save himself. I have been with suicidal depression myself. This is the root of the tree that I am growing with this nonprofit. As I mentioned, it has many branches that are growing and spreading in many different directions. My goal is simply to help others, with the hopes of sparing someone else some of what I have been through, either with my own struggles or by losing him in such a way. No one should be left to feel alone or unworthy.

### **3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?**

Amazing support has helped me succeed thus far. I wouldn't be anywhere near where I am if it wasn't for the support of friends, family and the community itself! We have a suicide awareness/prevention event for the local youth coming up in a few weeks that may not have been able to come to fruition if it wasn't for the support of people like Kathie Notarfonzo and her challenge to the community to make donations, with Inner Peace Floats matching them.

It was amazing to see people come through and it is humbling to know that they believe in what you are doing and support you. The community responded and now I know that we can keep pressing forward, that what we are doing is looked at in a positive way.

### **4. What inspires you?**

I am inspired by other people's stories. I am inspired by their challenges and their successes. I find that by listening to those stories, I see and hear of things that may help someone else succeed or may, at least, make their attempt to succeed easier. I think that offering support to one another is an amazing boost - to the person receiving and to the person giving it. Taking care of one another seems to be a lost skill any more. We need each other. We tend act like we are in this alone and that really can't be further from the truth. Some people are afraid to ask for help and some are afraid to offer it. I figure that if the help is just there for someone to use, they don't have to ask. They simply have to show up. Sometimes you have to be willing to see past a bad choice, to the good that is still in people. But people trying to make better decisions and/or change their lives for the better, whether they are dealing with mental illness, recovering from an abusive situation or from drug or alcohol addiction, need support. It takes a community with the some compassion. "We all make mistakes, have struggles and even regret things in our past. But you are not your mistakes, you are here with the power to shape your day and your future." - Steve Maraboli

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

Finances! Isn't that a challenge for every new business owner though? It is even harder when you don't have anything but ideas to sell! It is also hard to get people to financially support your ideas when they aren't directly affected by the issues that I try to address - mental health and suicide being at the front of it all. I hope that they never are directly affected. I also worry about failing, about letting someone down. It's a weird position to be in. Sometimes it can be a bit overwhelming.

### **6. What is your favorite local activity?**

We (my family) are hikers and geocachers, mountain and fire tower climbers and seekers of waterfalls. Living in this area is amazing when you go outside. Whether it is another hike through our beautiful gorge, visiting a park we have not been to yet or just hitting a trail in the woods, I have to say that hiking is our favorite local activity. It's a great way to break out of the routine, to spend time with family and/or friends and to find your balance.