

As seen on TV: Blessing Bracelet showcased in Hallmark movie available at Chéri Amour

LEFT OF CENTER WITH JOSHUA MALONI

The Blessing Bracelet described in a recent article is not only a real thing, it can really be yours, now that orders have arrived at Chéri Amour in Lewiston.

Storeowner Cheri Clark couldn't believe it when she learned the heartfelt tale of her longtime supplier, Dawn Sprong, was going to be featured in an Easter-themed Hallmark Movies & Mysteries presentation.

She was doubly shocked to see a picture of film star Amanda Schull and a story on the movie in the Tribune/Sentinel.

As it turns out, Clark has her own unique, Blessing Bracelet-inspired stories.

"I know Dawn very well," Clark said. "I've worked with her for years. There is a real Dawn."

She noted, "I have actually been selling them since 2014."

Clark continued, "My dear old friend that I used to work with in the hotel business, Vicki Edwards, was in a terrible car accident, and her and her husband and her dog escaped injury. Her three-wheeler went over – and they went over – and they were OK. She lives out in Georgia now, and knows me well. And a friend of hers from South Carolina sent her the Blessing Bracelet as a gift. And when she got it, she immediately called me up and said, 'Cheri, you have to see this bracelet. This is perfect for Chéri Amour.' So, I was given this as a blessing myself."

The Blessing Bracelet comes from the Chicago-area Made As Intended company. Each piece comes in different shapes, sizes and colors – but always with four beads. In the film, we're told each stone represents a blessing.

In the fictional story, Dawn takes a second job, as a restaurant waitress, to make ends meet for her and a teen son. While in training, she's told leaving a little something behind – candy or mints, for example – could lead to bigger tips. Instead, Dawn decides to gift customers a Blessing Bracelet. In no time, these accessories become the talk of the town – and so popular that Dawn is able to branch out into a new town storefront.

At Chéri Amour, "I affectionately call it my 'Helen bracelet,' and that's because it's named for Helen Murray, who is the sweetest of women, who received it as a gift; and when she received it as a gift, she decided *that is her gift*," Clark said. "And Helen has shared many blessings with many friends. Any-



Cheri Clark of Chéri Amour is shown with a Blessing Bracelet – and a copy of the article on the Hallmark movie that showcases the good-deed-beads.

Though the Blessing Bracelet always has four beads, the size, shape and color can change. Each one comes with a card and a note from Made As Intended.

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all pink ones for all the women – and they all wore them during her treatment. There's some really tender stories."

As for the version that made it to television, Clark said, "One of my friends, who has bought many Blessing Bracelets, called me – and she's a Hallmark junkie, that's my friend Katie. She loves Hallmark. She goes, 'Cheri, there's a movie about your bracelets.' I said,

'Are you sure?' She sent me like a

picture from the television of the

advertising. So, I called Dawn the

next day. I said, 'Dawn, are we fa-

mous?' She's like, 'Yeah!' She says,

I know; we can't even believe it.'

"And it's so beautiful and humble

one who touches her life, in she comes and she wants a Blessing Bracelet for them."

In 2018, Murray was recognized as the Youngstown Citizen of the Year by the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce and YBPA.

"Unfortunately, Helen just passed away – just when I found out about the Hallmark movie," Clark said. "I was so excited, and I couldn't wait to tell Helen, because I'd say, 'Oh, my 'Helen bracelets,'" and anyone who knew Helen, they'd come and

say, 'Oh, Helen Murray has this bracelet.' I'd say, 'Oh, my 'Helen bracelets! Right there.'

Clark recently gifted Murray's daughter, MaryEllen, with a supersized Blessing Bracelet.

"Some of the family came in, actually for the funeral, some from out of town; all wanted one, because they all knew about the Blessing Bracelet," Clark said.

She explained, "I've had one group of women, that they had a friend going through breast cancer, and they came in and they got

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2nd place: Hugh Purinton

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1st place Gabriella Eckstein

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3rd Place: Grace Pacillo

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how they are about this. And the story is that there was somebody that they knew, who always wanted to write a story for Hallmark, and they heard Dawn's story and said, 'I can make that into a great story.' And that's how it got born.

"It's inspired by, it's not verbatim, of how it goes. But it is inspired by the whole bracelets – and, yes, she did make them from her basement; and, yes, it was a family thing. And I think I can even remember back when I was calling, way back in the beginning, they were still making them. They weren't in a factory. They were totally doing it in their living room."

Clark said she texted Vicki as soon as she heard from Katie: "I said, 'Oh my God, they're making a Hallmark movie on your bracelet!' Because it's her bracelet. And she goes, 'Oh my God, send me something, so I can post it to my friends.' And so she did, and she shared it with all her friends – and her and all her friends came running in here to get one."

"It's been so sweet. It's my blessing that I have this connection with this beautiful bracelet."

Chéri Amour is located at 522 Center St., Lewiston.

The Blessing Bracelet-inspired article, "Amanda Schull teams with Hallmark to bring kindness & hope to Easter weekend," is online at www.wnypapers.com.

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A Rule of Thumb is "Never put anything on our body that you couldn't eat or drink safely." There are many safe, non-toxic cleaning and body products now available, so read the labels at your grocery or health food store or online.

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