

Meant to Bead

Andrea's Paper Beads

Beauty and, for that matter, a business possibility lie on the eyes of the beholder. In this case, a smart and fashion-savvy lady uses paper to create fantastic creations of bead necklaces and bracelets that can add glamor to any social scene.





OVERCOMING EVERY CHALLENGE
 Jessah Andrea Gonzales has made crafty and chic fashion accessories made from colorful paper beads. Her path to success had its own share of bumps, but she held on to her goals, with her faith in God and her positive mindset.



THE BEADWORK PROCESS
 Rolled paper beads are painted, varnished, and dried under the sunlight.



WOMENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Andrea's Paper Beads won the DTI's One Town, One Product (OTOP) Womentrepreneur Award in 2014. Jessah believes that from small beginnings, great things can happen with hard work and passion.



Who would think that the beads in eye-catching necklaces and bracelets were made from rolled, compressed and laminated paper? And it is the scrap paper that is made into fashion accessories of such an artistic wonder—what a way to reuse trash and make people even wear it!

Growing up from a family of craftsmen and accountants, Jessah Andrea Gonzales, 28, proved that she has the knack for it.

Named "Andrea's Paper Beads," Jessah's business would not have seen the light of day had she sailed out for her dream job in a cruise ship right after college. But as destiny would have it, her fondness for artistic crafts, her aging parents, and a health issue were blessings in disguise.

TALENT UNLEASHED

Diagnosed with an ovarian cyst in 2010, Jessah had to stay home, giving her ample time to make paper beads. She made enough to create fashion accessories for display in the One Town, One Product (OTOP) program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which took notice of her creations in 2011.

Those were her masterpieces, which she did single-handedly from volumes of scrap paper that she had solicited from her siblings and friends.



Making a necklace or a bracelet, one bead at a time, is laborious and time consuming. The business would need much more than her two hands.

"Believe it or not, I started out with only Php 200 capital. I just bought a cutter, ruler, and lamination materials," she recalls. "But then, I worked in Manila to learn how to handle people, and saved up to buy new materials in Quiapo before coming back here in Isabela."

In 2012, she started again and hired workers, which proved to be just as challenging. "Many women here would rather play cards and bingo [than do handicrafts]," Jessah says.

SLEEPLESS IN ISABELA

Jessah sometimes traded sleep to have the time she needed to conceptualize designs for her next production. Uniqueness of design is a demand factor.

"At that time, I had not undergone the trainings from the DTI and couldn't surf the Web for YouTube lessons as there was no internet access here yet," Jessah explains.

GUIDING OTHERS

Every fashion accessory from Andrea's Paper Beads are completely unique, just like how a shell on the beach is different from the others. Now Jessah pays it forward by teaching young female crafters how to make their own creations.

Moreover, her product, being made of paper, often raised concern about durability. "But I told them that it had been tried and tested," she says of its water resistance from lamination.

SAVING GRACE

The trainings from the DTI, since 2011, have improved the quality and craftsmanship of her products. "We were also able to join the Manila FAME [and other trade fairs] because of DTI," Jessah points out.

Manila FAME had Jessah's products viewed by importers from all over the world, and many of them became her clients.

Since then, Jessah's exhibits have been included in DTI's One Town, One Product (OTOP) pavilion in Manila FAME.

Pitted against the best in the Philippines and Asia, Andrea's Paper Beads held its ground in Manila FAME's fashion category and won the OTOPI's Womanpreneur Award from the DTI.

The award proves that Jessah is truly meant to bead.

HOW DTI HELPED

The DTI provided Andrea's Paper Beads much-needed exposure to both local and international markets by inviting her to participate in trade exhibits such as the **One Town, One Product (OTOP)** fair, **Sikat Pinoy**, and **Manila FAME**.



Making Paper Beads



1 Assort the papers according to their color. Use scrap bond papers from offices for making pure white beads.



2 Trade secret: Cut the paper based on the specific pattern of the desired shape.



3 Roll the paper after cutting.



4 Paint the rolled paper bead according to the desired color.



5 Varnish and let it dry. Laminate afterwards.



6 Dry the beads under direct sunlight.