



PRESS RELEASE

Dry Canyon Arts Association
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Downtown Businesses Boost Jumpstart Art With Tote Bags

"Frequent Flyer" Discount Tote Bags Are a Win-Win for Art Education and First Friday Shoppers

Dry Canyon Arts Association was the beneficiary of an idea from an unlikely source recently when Jessica Klein, owner of Desert Prairie Boutique in downtown Redmond used Chat GPT to come up with an idea to turn First Friday browsers into repeat customers. Normally, the prospect of Artificial Intelligence makes artists either resentful at its unlicensed use of their work, or suspicious of its appearance in work supposedly made by human hands. But on this occasion, Chat GPT suggested that Desert Prairie Boutique use tote bags as a promotional tool. Klein was the human, however, who took this nugget of an idea and blended it with Jumpstart Art, a project initiated and promoted by Dry Canyon Arts Association (DCAA). Since DCAA participates in First Friday Art Walk as the group who coordinates most of the artist exhibits, it seemed like a match made in heaven (or Redmond).

Klein's idea has manifested into a tote bag, available at Desert Prairie Boutique and several other downtown businesses, that proudly calls on viewers to "Shop Local" on Redmond's First Friday. Ten dollars out of each purchase of a \$20 tote bag goes to support Jumpstart Art, DCAA's program to bring art educators into every Redmond elementary school classroom. And as an incentive to buy the bag and to return to shop again, participating businesses are offering 10% discounts when shoppers show their tote bags during each First Friday.

Klein is really passionate about the new program and is starting to see the results. "I have a mother and daughter who bought a bag and have come to the last two First Fridays and have made it a point that this is their shopping day together, to see the artists, get the discount. They're so excited about it and I love that!" she said.

Aromé is one of the downtown businesses that has embraced the Jumpstart Art/First Friday tote bag. "It was all Jessica's idea from Desert Prairie Boutique. She came up with the concept and pitched it to surrounding businesses asking us if we wanted to participate and it was an absolute "Yes!," said Janice Bell, owner of Aromé, a cuisine and kitchen specialty shop. Bell explained that the hope for the long run is to see those return customers and the financial benefits that come with better sales. "In the short term, it's more about making friends, generating a sense of community, and having a positive atmosphere in the store which I think is really important too."

The Jumpstart Art program began in 2024 when DCAA committed their organization to raise enough funds each school year to fill a funding gap in the Redmond School District budget that left elementary schools with no money for visual art education. Through grants, fundraising and donations, DCAA provided nearly \$70,000 in the 2024-2025 school year - enough to provide funding to pay for visiting art educators for every elementary school class in the Redmond School District. They plan to do the same for the 2025-2026 school year and each year that such a funding gap remains. The First Friday tote bag sales will contribute to that goal.

The following downtown Redmond businesses have pledged to sell tote bags and offer ten percent discounts to tote bag shoppers during First Fridays: Desert Prairie Boutique, Aromé, High Desert Florals, Willow Wild, and Swan Song Vintage. Tote bags will not be available for purchase at Cognitive Surplus Stationery and Gifts, but they are offering a 30% discount on featured items to First Friday shoppers who show their tote bags at the register.