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MAKING MERCH ON THE MOVE



You've probably enjoyed a food or beverage cart at an event, but soon you'll be able to get event merchandise literally "hot off the press" from a new mobile screen printing cart thanks to the Downtown Enhancement Grant and Ambient Inks! Not sure why this is exciting for the Eau Claire community or what we're even talking about? Allow us to elaborate.

Ambient Inks, a local print shop that does so much more, has schlepped their anything-but-mobile screen printing equipment to several events in the Chippewa Valley over the years. Not only did the live screen printing add a cool spectacle to the festivities, but those buying the merch also got a mini education lesson and glimpse into how a local business worked. These experiences were rewarding for Ambient, however they were having to turn down events that were shorter or smaller in size because of the significant time and physical commitment it took to lug their mammoth screen printing set-up around. They wanted to do something to fix the situation, but their main day-to-day work took priority.

As many businesses have had to do this year, Ambient revisited some ideas that were previously shelved and decided that the Downtown Enhancement Grant might be able to help make a more mobile screen printing cart a reality. Although they had stiff competition from nine other eligible plans, a panel of judges made up of grant donors agreed that Ambient's long-term philosophical vision of continually reinventing themselves in ways that put people, community, and our world first paired with the promise of an engaging, educational screen printing opportunity at Eau Claire community events, helped make their application stand out among the rest.

The Ambient team will take the rest of the year to work with as many local vendors as possible to assemble the cart. Then be on the lookout next spring for Ambient's mobile merch maker at a Downtown Eau Claire or community event near you. And for local businesses and organizations, they'd be happy to discuss how their cart can help draw interest and revenue at your next event.

More About the Grant

The **\$2,000 Downtown Enhancement Grant** is awarded twice a year. A judging committee made up of donors reviewed all eligible downtown enhancement plans that were submitted. This year 10 eligible plans were reviewed which is the most to date in program history! In light of COVID-19, there was also an adjustment to the eligibility of this grant cycle that waived the requirement for the business to have been in operation for 2+ years. Thank you to the sponsors of this grant: Jill and Tom Barland, **B-Framed Galleries**, **Charter Bank**, Kristen and Donn Dexter, **JAMF**, **JB Systems**, Kerry and Dan Kincaid, **Royal Credit Union**, **Ruder Ware**, Lissa and Tom Siedow, **U.S. Bank**.



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