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## A creative outlet becomes a business for a Barre teen

By Peter Cobb Correspondent Jul 5, 2023



Grace Berry, of Barre, poses with two of her crocheted creations.  
 photo by Peter Cobb



For Grace Berry, inspiration for her art came from a very personal struggle.

The Barre teen battled with anorexia. Crocheting helped get her the help she needed.

In 2021, Grace, then 16, was diagnosed with anorexia, an eating disorder that can sometimes prove fatal. While in treatment, she needed a creative outlet.

"During my recovery, some severe anxiety came up, and I was looking for something to distract me, but also to center and calm me. I taught myself how to crochet and started making a ton of crocheted creations," she said.

Three years later, she has a growing business: Grace's Creations.

"When I started recovery and working toward getting better, I was really anxious, so I decided to teach myself something new, and then my room got filled up with my stuff, and my friends said, 'You should try selling some of this,' so I did," Berry said recently.

Berry said she never will be totally cured, but she is no longer in danger.

"I will never be totally over it, but I am in a really good place right now. Health-wise, I am officially in recovery, which is a huge relief for my parents," she said.

Her parents are Tori and Michael Berry. Michael is director of curriculum for the Montpelier Roxbury School District.

Berry sells her crafts through Treppie, a website dedicated to helping young women learn how to start and run a business.

"I sell whimsical, fun, stuffed animals, keychains, and lots of other stuff made with 100% good vibes. I just want people to be happy," she said.

Berry started using basic patterns she found on various apps and software programs. As her skills grew, she began sketching her own designs.

She started selling her crafts two years ago. Until a recent — and unexpected — post on the YouTube channel Hopescope, she was selling two to three pieces a month. After the segment featuring her crafts was posted, she got 30 orders in the five days.

Meeting the rush of orders was not easy. "It was a bit of a crazy couple of days, but I made it, I got all the orders out in the mail," she said.

Hopescope features YouTube influencer Hope Allen unboxing and reviewing various products. She has more than 3 million subscribers. Allen recently featured Grace's handmade products, including a pink-and-yellow crocheted dog bandana, mini crocheted plush turtles, a crocheted blue whale keychain, and a large white crocheted turtle plushie.

As of earlier this week, the video has been viewed 1.1 million times.

"I watched her videos when I was in a low place, they really cheered me up. I had been following Hopescope's channel for a long time, and one day she (Allen) DM'd (direct message) me and told me she ordered a whole bunch of my crocheted products and would be featuring them to her audience of millions. I was shocked and excited," Berry said. "It was pretty crazy, with my production going into high gear to get all the orders out, but I am so grateful."

Berry, a recent graduate of Spaulding High School, plans to attend Champlain College in Burlington this August. She said she hopes to continue her crochet business.

"It's really helpful for paying for college," she said.

This past year, she said she spent 30 hours a week crocheting her crafts. She is not sure how much time she will have in college, but she remains hopeful the business will continue.

"I feel that my business grew with me as a person, and it made me realize that art is really transformative. You hear that all the time, but my experience made me believe in it," she said.

You can find Grace's Creations at [Treppie.com](https://www.treppie.com) online.



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