



Murtle's Handmade Chocolates

MELISSA WHEELER IS
CREATING SOMETHING
SWEET IN DOWNTOWN
OWOSSO

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

"I was with Walgreens for 13 years when I decided I needed a new career and to get out of the corporate world. A friend of mine was making chocolate in the back of his restaurant. I asked him to show me how... and the rest is history!

We start with the best chocolate we can find. It's fair trade chocolate and 'couverture', which means it has to be tempered in a special machine—it can't just be melted and used. Everything we make, we make with our hands. There's no machine that cranks out the chocolate, stamps it and wraps it. Every stick in a lollipop is put there with our hands. Every cream is rolled with our hands.

Along with the candy we make, we offer things from a lot of other small businesses as a way to support them while giving our customers a variety of options: pretzels from Imlay City, cheese balls made in Colorado. The friend who taught me how to make chocolate now makes popcorn—it's grown in Hemlock—and his popcorn is here, too.

Everything we do, we do with love. Even when we package things, we treat them like they're our babies: we saw them from the beginning to the end! We don't just throw your stuff in a box or a bag, we take great care to make sure that your chocolate gets to where it's going and looks good when it gets there.

We started off four doors down in a tiny little shop and today, the space we're in now is probably five or six times as big. We've been here since November and every day we're just so grateful. This is a really cool space, our landlords are fantastic and this building was actually also a candy store 100 years ago, so it's come full circle. It was called Candyland, and we still have the holes in the walls where the soda fountain came through upstairs.

I love downtown Owosso. I grew up in a small town with a little dime store similar to Springrove and I have great memories of being in its downtown, and I just wanted to have a spot where people could come in and have the same memories that I had as a kid. Customers can watch us make chocolate and wrap the boxes with ribbon, it's amazing those little things that stick with you your whole life."

—Melissa Wheeler, Murtle's Handmade Chocolates



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