



The Gratitude Mission

Leesburg resident Jennifer Garman founded GratitudeMission.org, in 2017 to help families instill the value of gratitude in their children. The company's first product, the Growing Gratitude Tree, is a vinyl wall decal in the shape of a tree that comes in different shapes and sizes. The company's product portfolio has expanded to a book, Flourish- 7 Ways Gratitude Can Transform Your Life, and- recently- to speaking engagements.

The Challenge

Jennifer engaged with the Loudoun SBDC within the first few months of deciding to start her own business. She sought advice on first steps to start a business and to streamline her business, as well as avoid "first timer" mistakes.

Working with Loudoun SBDC

Jennifer initially met with Eric Byrd, Manager, Loudoun SBDC. Eric helped define the business "...from conceptualization into production", according to Jennifer. He offered insights and best practices on her go-to-market strategy and plan as she rolled her product out to her target market: families. "Eric is extremely knowledgeable about all things marketing, so working with him was incredibly helpful", says Jennifer.

As her business took off and pivoted, Jennifer continued to meet with Eric. For example, when she was offered the opportunity to sell her product on the Home Shopping Network, she worked with Loudoun SBDC to negotiate her contract with them. She has also come to the Loudoun SBDC with questions related to cost management and budgeting.

Based on her experience, Jennifer believes the Loudoun SBDC is the best place to start for anyone thinking about starting a business. She says, "Go and meet there even before starting up your LLC, just so you are prepared going in and can check all the boxes."

Results

GratitudeMission.org has continued its success and has even become more relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic as individuals and families looking to focus on the positive in the midst of uncertainty. In addition to publishing a book, Flourish- 7 Ways Gratitude Can Transform Your Life, Jennifer is now expanding into speaking engagements. She is also seeking to reach a new audience with her message: schools.

According to Jennifer, "The Loudoun SBDC has been instrumental in the success and growth of my business. There are so many resources and answers from people who have started businesses themselves, I can't recommend them enough. "