

Not Afraid to Take the Shot: Catch Up with Two ASA Alumni Entrepreneurs

“For me, it all started with hosting wine nights and making charcuterie boards for friends and family.” **Taylor Wilson** (ASA 2014) has always had the desire to own her own business and enjoy the flexibility that brings. It began pretty simply.

“I was getting so much positive feedback and praise for my boards that I started creating them to give as gifts to coworkers, bosses, and relatives. After some time, I had all the encouragement I needed to just go for it and register my business, Social Bites, to become my own LLC. Even though I’m only 28, I feel like I have had so many ideas fail, but this one has shown a constant growth of success. I truly believe God has blessed this for me and am so grateful.”



Taylor with one of her charcuterie boards

She admits it is scary to legally start her own business and invest time and money without having the guarantee of continued success. Social Bites is currently a side business for Taylor; she graduated from Aquinas College with a Child Life Specialist degree. Her goal is to make Social Bites her only source of income. For Taylor

it’s more than just a way to make money.

“I love the feeling of escape I get during the process of the creation of the boards. I turn on a good playlist and get to enjoy some me time.” Ordering from Taylor is easy. She’ll customize boards for any event and offers pickup or delivery.

“Right now, I have both Instagram and Facebook. You can find me on either and message me. Or, search “socialbitesgr”!

Michaela Cosgrove (ASA 2012) began her business, Brush & Bark LLC, a bit unexpectedly. Having just graduated from Centre College with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, she found herself in a global pandemic.

“It was a very uncertain and unprecedented time. The pandemic kept many of us inside our homes with very little face-to-face interaction with people. A fellow Catholic Central alum and I decided it might be fun to get a booth at our local farmers market to give us something to keep busy with and get outside. We had always enjoyed painting and had a love of animals and nature. We decided to focus on Michigan wildlife to get us started, and we spent the summer creating new paintings and trying out new product ideas. After a few months at the farmers market, we realized that lots of people were just as excited about wildlife and artwork as we were. We started selling more and more and getting requests for new things all the time. As the world began to open back up for business, we continued making and selling our art on the side. Three years later, we are still creating new art and expanding our business!”

Michaela finds a special sense of purpose in creating something that people relate to and enjoy. She and her partner wanted Brush & Bark to not only

be about the art they were making but also about raising awareness for the incredible natural world we live in. While it started as a simple way to keep busy during a scary time in their lives, it quickly became a way to give a spotlight to local wildlife especially species that aren’t depicted in paintings very often.



Michaela with a display of her work

“I am proud of how far we have come. We had no idea Brush & Bark would become what it is today. We still laugh at how empty our booth was on our first day at the farmers market compared to what it looks like now. In addition to working on new art almost constantly, we have had to learn about what it takes to own a business. Between managing our social media pages, keeping up with inventory and supplies, and filing our own taxes, there has been a lot to learn!”

Their products are for sale on their website: www.brushandbark.com. You can also follow them on social media (Instagram: [brush_and_bark](https://www.instagram.com/brush_and_bark) & Facebook: [brushandbarkshop](https://www.facebook.com/brushandbarkshop)) to see their in-person market schedule. You can also email at hello@brushandbark.com.