

YOUR GAZETTENET SUBSCRIPTION

[Login/Subscribe](#) : [Account Center](#) : [Forgot/change password](#) : [Problems](#) : [FAQs](#) : [Log Out](#) / [What's Free on GazetteNET?](#)

gazettenet
DAILY HAMPSHIRE
GAZETTE

New dancewear store opens in Easthampton

BY KRISTINA TEDESCHI STAFF WRITER

 EMAIL THIS WRITER  MORE STORIES BY THIS WRITER

[Originally published on: Thursday, July 19, 2007]

EASTHAMPTON - Richard and Mary Ann Hanlon believe customers should never be pressured into buying.

They say that's the outlook they're bringing with them to their new business venture, Mary Ann's Dance and More, on Cottage Street.

The store, slated to officially open Aug. 5, will sell everything from dance and fitness apparel, such as tights and leotards, to tap, jazz and ballet shoes sold below the suggested retail price, Mary Ann Hanlon says.

The space, painted a bright blue and largely empty save for metal clothing racks, a shipment of fitness gear from Danskin, and a cozy sitting area, was home to the former business Quilts and Needlework That Go. Wednesday morning, the couple and their daughter Katelyn sat in the 56 Cottage St. store, eagerly awaiting a delivery of merchandise from dance apparel suppliers Bloch and Capezio.

When the owner of the former craft store contacted the Hanlons asking if they wanted to rent the space, the couple say it was the perfect opportunity to launch their own business, something they'd talked about throughout their 15-year marriage.

"Once we got the space, everything has just fallen into place," Richard Hanlon said.

Mary Ann, who works as a night manager at Holmes Studio of Dance, Music and Wellness on Parsons Street, said she got the idea for a dance apparel store after hearing about the inconveniences parents encountered getting dancewear for their children.

"I was listening to all the parents complain about having to travel either 17 or 22 miles in either direction to get supplies," she said. "We were just sitting at dinner one night and thought, why not?"

Now, five months later, the Hanlons have a store, a Web site, and a business plan, which includes placing custom orders for patrons, delivering large orders, carrying the dancewear and shoes that area studios require, frequent buyer discounts, and not pressuring customers. "That's our aim: treat people the way you want to be treated in business," Mary Ann says. The store will provide free gift-wrapping for any occasion.

Mary Ann's Dance and More will offer makeup and skin-care color consultations by appointment and for walk-ins. Mary Ann has worked as a certified beauty adviser with Avon for nearly 13 years, she says. She said she'd like to use her experience to help dancers with their stage makeup.

"You can put it on correctly without your face arriving before the rest of



GORDON DANIELS
Mary Ann and Richard Hanlon, owners of Dance Apparel and More at 56 Cottage St., Easthampton, unpack dancewear this week.

[Enlarge photo](#) | [Buy photos](#)

you," Mary Ann said with a laugh.

The Hanlons surveyed 25 area dance studios to help them find out what they needed, Mary Ann said.

In hearing from the Amherst Ballet Theatre Company, for instance, the Hanlons learned the most important thing about pointe shoes is that they fit properly, the couple said. So, on Aug. 4, Mary Ann's Dance and More will offer pointe shoe fittings by appointment from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a representative from Capezio.

The couple is planning a "meet and greet" event for dance studio owners July 29 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the store. For more information about the store, visit www.maryannsdanceandmore.com, or call (413) 282-0054.

Kristina Tedeschi can be reached at KTedeschi@gazettenet.com.

[Mansfield MA Foreclosures](#)

Free list of foreclosures, fixer uppers and estate sales save 1000s

[Homes for Sale](#)

View Homes and find a Real Estate Professional to help you

Daily Hampshire Gazette © 2007 All rights reserved
[Copyright Notice](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)