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## BUSINESS ON THE JOB / IN CHARGE

### For perfumer-photographer, 'It's all about people'

By Jennifer Tramm

FOR THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson, Arizona | Published: 03.02.2007

The essence of Kathleen Dreier's business is capturing the essences of others.

A social worker by day and a single mother, the busy Dreier also owns a custom perfume and photography business.

The two fields are not as different as one might think, the 46-year-old entrepreneur said.

"Perfumery is capturing a person's essence," she said. "Photography is that in pixels."

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As a custom perfumer, Dreier creates a person's "personal atmosphere" in scent using techniques she learned from mentors in Alaska and California.

Using seven to 12 essential oils — the concentrated oils of a raw plant, such as lavender — Dreier creates a one-of-a-kind mix for each of her customers.

A customer ideally would sit with her in her home and they would talk first about what scents the customer likes and about his or her personal life.

On a mirrored tray, dozens of tiny glass bottles with plastic wands

hold the various oils she uses during each mixing.

Dreier dabs the oils a little bit at a time on special tissues, one after the other in a row. She then moves the tissue under her nose, smelling the combination to see if it fits the personality and tastes of her client.

"A custom fragrance in the end is a combination of intuition, a person's receptivity to having the scent made for them and the blend marrying to the body's chemistry," she said.

Dreier says the techniques she uses, similar to those of ancient Egyptians, are an intuitive art form.

The oils represent different aspects. Dreier says lavender is associated with elevated mood, bergamot with well-being.

Once, while mixing a fragrance for a woman at a fair, Dreier said she was drawn to use oils associated with healing. After she was finished, she discovered that the woman had been diagnosed just that day with cancer.

Started in Denver in 1991, Dreier's company Esens has allowed her to counterbalance her experiences at her day job with Child Protective Services. "I see abused kids every day," she said.

Dreier sees a common thread that connects all of the jobs she does.

"It's all about people. My social-worker job has taught me about compassion," she said. "I think it's helped me be a good perfumer."

Also along that thread is her work as a photographer, begun after Dreier moved to Tucson in 2004 with her now 10-year-old son, Logan.

She said she specializes in "candid portrait and event photography" and markets her own images as well.

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Kathleen Dreier says making personalized fragrances is an intuitive art form, using techniques similar to those of ancient Egypt.

JIM DAVIS / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

#### PROFILE

Name: Kathleen Dreier

Job: Owner, Esens Custom Fragrances and Esens Photography (www.esens.com)

Age: 46

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The photography side of the business is not always business.

Dreier has donated her time, skills and materials to the Shyann Kindness Project, a Tucson-based non-profit organization that promotes kindness and provides gift packages to stressed families, said Sandy Rosati, the project's founder and director.

"I've found her to be a very generous person," Rosati said of Dreier, whom she met during an event for visual-arts students at Pima Community College.

Dreier's professional photography services mean a great deal to the charity, sparing the group photography expenses, Rosati said.

Dreier has also embraced the Internet, taking orders online at www.esens.com since 1998 and, most recently, providing a place for her photo portfolio.

Dreier has a diverse life as a photographer, perfumer and social worker, as well as a single parent and art dealer.

Rudy Wagner, a CPS supervisor, said he didn't know about custom fragrances until he went to one of Dreier's art showings.

"She created a fragrance for me that came out of my qualities and it turned out pretty good," he said.

They keep in touch, even though they don't work in the same area of CPS.

"I think she's really grounded and she knows what she wants to do," he said.

See ON THE JOB, D5

• *Jennifer Tramm is a University of Arizona student who is apprenticing at the Star. Contact her at 573-4181 or starapprentice@azstarnet.com.*



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