

# Not your typical arts and crafts

## >Inspired employee finds real reward in giving back

By Jessica Hallam

Vanessa Kennedy's jewelry tells a story.

It began in 2007 when the Inventory Control Specialist attended a screening for the documentary, *Searching for Angela Shelton*.

The film shines a light on abuse, violence and other traumas women face, and inspired Kennedy to channel her own "negative patterns" into something creative.

"I was having big issues with anxiety attacks," says the North Bay employee. "The movie inspired me to 'remove the trauma' and use it in different ways. I just bought a couple of beads and went to work."

### Anxiety

And so, what began as a treatment for anxiety – threading bits of metal, gemstones and beads together to create delicate pieces of art – has since evolved into a small business. Known as *Fluttering Designs*, Kennedy's handcrafted jewelry can be found in various galleries and shops. Her web site allows customers from all around the world to purchase her wares.

"The name was inspired by my anxiety – because that's



Vanessa Kennedy poses amidst a selection of her handmade creations.

what it caused me to do – flutter all over the place," she says.

As a military brat, Kennedy was born in Germany and moved to Canada when she was a toddler.

**"People like Vanessa really keep me going."**

>Angela Shelton, Activist

"I've had problems with being really nervous since I was little," she says. "Having a father in the military, I always missed him very much – [I was] always anxious, always a worrier."

In 1994, she moved to North

Bay. Kennedy now works in the NWSSC warehouse where she says she has honed numerous skills that aid her in running *Fluttering Designs*.

"Because I spend a lot of time counting inventory and some of the parts are really small, I'm able to work with the small, seed beads," she says.

"This would drive most people up the wall, but it's almost second nature to me ... I've also come up with a couple of different ways to track my inventory thanks to my position with Nasittuq."

### Angela Shelton

Perhaps best of all, Kennedy's business allows her to give back to the very char-

ity that lifted her spirits during tough times in '07 – the Angela Shelton Foundation.

### Charity

Kennedy devotes 35 per cent of each online sale to the foundation, as well as volunteers her time to raise awareness as part of the foundation's "Army of Angels".

Angela Shelton, who appeared on Oprah to promote the documentary that inspired Kennedy, is also an actor, model, author, and activist. The California-native says she's grateful for people like Kennedy; they embody the act of "living joyfully."

### Inspiration

"People like Vanessa really inspire me to keep going," says Shelton. "Every time I see her work or she sends in a donation, it inspires me to keep going. These women are the movement."

Shelton has devoted her life to helping fellow women overcome negative thought patterns brought on by abuse as well as everyday stressors.

"With the world the way it is today, so many people are having panic attacks and are anxiety ridden," says Shelton. Kennedy's web site is found at [www.flutteringdesigns.ca](http://www.flutteringdesigns.ca).