

Meet the Farmers: Anna Gustafson

Hidden Hearts Honey

Smithfield, N.Y.



Anna at the Hidden Hearts Honey booth at the Downtown Farmers Market. Make sure to say hello when you visit Tuesday!

Hidden Hearts Honey is a brand new woman-owned business specializing in pure honey and beeswax candles. Located just one hill over from the Fenner Windmill Farm, Carol Lasicki's Smithfield property is a hub of activity. Bees buzz throughout 16 beehives to produce honey at the Apiary, while Carol – with help from her children – operate a little candle shop from her basement.

This is how Carol wanted to spend her retirement. “She took out a business loan, bought some bees, and here we are,” Anna Gustafson, Carol's daughter - and the face of Hidden Hearts Honey at the Downtown Farmers Market – said with a smile.

“So far, we've had amazing success here at the Downtown Farmers Market, and this is only our fourth week,” Anna said when the Downtown Committee spoke to her on Tuesday, July 12.

Still in its first year of business - and first season participating at area Farmers Markets - Hidden Hearts is trying to figure out what works best. They're happy to take your requests.

“It's a building thing,” Anna explained. “The very first week I was here, we didn't bring any four-pound honey jars and I almost sold out of my one-pound and two-pound jars of honey. Then, different people ask for different things, so I bring different things for them. For example, someone asked about a one-pound beeswax candle, so I brought that this week.”

The display of intricate candles – all made from beeswax – is impressive. “A lot of people think that we carve them, but they're actually molds,” Anna said. She says process is simple: They warm up the beeswax, put the wick in the silicone mold, and pour the beeswax in. “It takes a whole day to make one candle. We have lots of molds, but you can only make one of each at a time.”

The only candles the Hidden Hearts crew makes by hand are the hand-dipped candles. Market visitors can identify those by their rounded tips. Anna says most of their candles burn for about an hour per ounce.

She pointed to a dragon shaped candle (inspired by Game of Thrones) as an example. “If it's about two-and-a-half to three ounces, you'll get about two-and-a-half to three hours out of it. But, because this one is a strange shape, it may melt a little differently, so you might not get the same ounce-to-hour burn time.”

Meanwhile, the honey that Hidden Hearts Honey sells is 100% pure and comes with many natural benefits. Honey is said to reduce seasonal allergy symptoms as well as assist with weight loss goals and diabetes management.

“Plus, it tastes great. I don't know anyone who doesn't like honey,” Anna smiled. “I put honey in everything. I substitute it for sugar in my coffee and I bake with it.”



For a list of other benefits associated with pure honey, and more information about Hidden Hearts Honey, please visit the Hidden Hearts Honey website. You can keep up with its area Farmers Market and craft show appearances by following the business on Facebook. Both links are provided below.



For more information about Hidden Hearts Honey, please visit <http://hiddenheartshoney.com>