

Jo Bryant

Pottytree Puppets

Writing a children's storybook marked the beginning of an exciting business venture for Twyford-based Jo Bryant. She now runs a unique business which uses puppets and role play in a series of workshops aimed at exploring aspects of children's - and adults' - behaviour.

After writing her first book, "Mrs Pottytree and the Flying Carpet" in 2001, teacher and drama specialist Jo Bryant searched for an intriguing way to bring her characters to life so she could demonstrate the story to schoolchildren. This led her to develop her own animated puppet shows featuring the book's characters.

Aimed at younger children initially, she created a series of fantasy storytelling sessions involving role play and featuring her own puppets. The creative framework allows the children to explore emotions, behaviour and problem solving while having fun.

These interactive sessions proved so popular, Jo developed more animated shows geared towards primary and secondary school age children. Again, role play involvement, team activities, and puppet movement skills play a major part in each workshop. Currently two new shows are in development, using familiar characters from her previous stories - "Grace's Garden" and "Mrs Pottytree Meets the Alien". She is also devising a Victorian programme that will be tailored for year 5/6 children.

Jo recently completed the Creative Business Sector course which she says proved invaluable in guiding her business to the next level. Indeed she aims to operate Pottytree Puppets on a full-time basis from September 2007 and was one of 5 winners who managed to increase turnover by £15,000 + during the course duration.

Jo makes all her own puppets, which range in size from sock-puppets to life-size foam creations. These full size puppets form the basis for an interactive role-play workshop aimed at business people, helping them understand how to manage conflicts in the workplace.

Pottytree Puppets also run comedy puppet shows, social education sessions, and puppet making workshops for children and teachers. "The children can even choose their own scenery and props. Not only will they go home with a new puppet friend, but also with the skills to really make it come to life" says Jo, "I can also tailor-make a workshop to suit the specific needs of a group." For more information about Pottytree Puppets, visit www.pottytreepuppets.co.uk.



www.businessinberkshire.co.uk/creativebusiness