

Rebecca Whittier

IRIS Blossom, Owner

AGE: 29

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

Portland, Maine

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN CHARLOTTE AREA?

Around 10 years

TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOU?

While I mostly wear black, I still find a way to light up any room I walk into. I am outgoing, easy to converse with and have been known to be a free spirit. I am enthusiastic about what I do and do not hide my elations. I am very empathetic and am always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. I am recognized around Charlotte, not only for my work, but because others know I am someone approachable and fun. My identity is centered around abundance, positivity, motivation, and 90's R&B.

DURING YOUR TIME VOLUNTEERING FOR A COMMUNITY ACTIVITY OR PROJECT, WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?

I was in the founder's club for The Walk to End Alzheimer's, where I organized and oversaw a team to raise over \$10,000 to put us in the grand champions club. Crossing the end of the line with the child of a friend allowed me to really see the community come together to aid something near and dear to me. Through my business, there are two recent instances of us giving back to the community. The first was a workshop for a program funded by the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art for Time Out Youth, where we gave visibility and art to a group of marginalized children by making terrariums with them. Some of these children face problems with homelessness, abuse, and alienation for being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Being able to bring them back to nature while having fun and expressing themselves with a variety of plants and materials allowed their happiness to shine through, surely making this memorable. Both the youth and Bechtler representatives couldn't stop talking about the workshop, showing they had just a great time as we did.

Another recent instance of giving back to the community was a guest talk my business partner and I prepared for a group of local high schoolers held at UNC Charlotte. We discussed our lives through high school, during and after college, and our careers. I fielded questions about why I went to college, what I did with my degree, how I was forced to adapt, and if I was happy in my current life. Although loaded questions, being able to honestly answer and shine light on the topic of higher education and its perception really left a lasting impact on the students I spoke to, and myself. It allowed me to reflect on how far I've come and helped them to make the decisions most applicable to them. We had some of them follow our business on Instagram, where they left comments thanking us for our insight.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY? PLEASE BE AS DETAILED AS YOU CAN.

I contribute to the community through our art. There is a lot going on in the world that isn't pretty, but we've been able to brighten the days of so many through the floral art we create. Not just a creative outlet for me, but being able to make someone's day, event, or special occasion a highlight for them makes it worthwhile. I help to create the flower bombs that have popped up around the city. We are sustainable, using flowers that are soon unsalable to allow passers-by the opportunity to enjoy flowers at every stage of their life cycle. Being able to allow the community that is so important to me a chance to stop and smell the flowers and appreciate the small surprises that can happen is really the fuel that keeps igniting the fire of my creativity and drive to take my business further. I am not afraid to speak up during injustices. I am active within my friend groups and groups of colleagues to talk about and enact change. I am always there to volunteer time when needed. I donate where I can. I am always striving to be my best self.

PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS YOU'VE RECEIVED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

My business was awarded the Charlotte Magazine Best of the Best "Best Florist" award this year. We've also been recognized in print and television media multiple times.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR INTEREST?

I love patronizing local Charlotte restaurants and bars. You can find me roaming the greenways with my dog (mind you she's 14 and is sometimes in a stroller, don't judge).

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE QUOTE THAT YOU STAND BY?

A quote I've lived by is "ask, believe, receive", encouraging me to manifest the life I want in accomplishable ways.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS? 10 YEARS?

In the future (5-10 years), I see myself owning my own event space, using the knowledge and skills from both of my careers to help others have memorable days. I see our flower business growing. I want to have a family.

CAN YOU SHARE ONE THING THAT IS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

I've always wanted to hug a chimpanzee.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU USED YOUR PASSPORT?

I backpacked through Australia for a month a while back. I need to renew mine for some upcoming trips!

WHAT IS A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO ONE KNOWS?

I've climbed the tallest bridge in the world, ziplined through rainforests, and ate crocodile.

WHO IS YOUR HERO?

My parents have everything from nothing. I am doing the same now, building a life and career I only dreamt of.

WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?

A million little pieces – James Frey

WHAT WAS THE LAST MOVIE YOU SAW?

I committed to the 3+ hours that is Titanic.

WHAT WAS THE LAST CONCERT YOU SAW?

I saw Major Lazer in a drive-thru pandemic concert at Charlotte Motor Speedway! A great experience.

INSTAGRAM – PERSONAL

INSTAGRAM – WORK