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Beautifully Broken

Cathedral Jewels

What happens to broken stained glass windows when they are no longer gracing a place of worship or embellishing a home? More often than not, the gleaming fragments end up in a landfill—but not if glass artist Lindy Malin has her way. She “rescues” fragments from antique

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stained glass windows, and transforms them into “Cathedral Jewels!”



What are Cathedral Jewels, you may ask? Spend a little time with jewelry makers in Lancaster, and you'll soon see a necklace or pair of earrings with an intriguing accent. A shimmering piece of smooth, rounded, polished glass dangles there amidst the other beads and findings, providing a focal point with an air of age and mystery about it.



Reach out and touch the luminescent pendant, and your fingers will be treated to a warm, buttery-soft feel unlike any other glass. You're experiencing six weeks worth of polishing. The loving care and creativity that goes into each hand-shaped treasure transforms the cast-off shards into keepsakes. Cathedral Jewels are all recycled from stained glass that's at least 100 years old. Lindy Malin restores them to a luster worthy of another century of appreciation.



During a time in her life when she herself was feeling broken and discarded, Lindy discovered stained glass. Over a two-year period, she went through 13 bouts of surgery, lost the use of her voice, was struck by a drunk driver and finally, endured the death of her mother. She felt like she was a shattered version of her former self. During this painful journey, Lindy was working with a professional glass cutter who had suffered a traumatic brain injury. She helped him relearn basic life skills (riding the bus to his job at the glass studio, managing his money, etc.). In exchange, he would save her little shards of ancient glass left over from windows he was restoring. Lindy wanted to find a creative way to use or display these tiny gems he had given her.

One day Lindy got out the old rock tumbler her father had used in his science classroom to smooth semiprecious stones. She tumbled her stained glass for several weeks, checking the progress weekly, and adding progressively finer and finer polishing grits. When the process was complete, she found she had gently curving, glistening treasures!



Lindy has perfected her polishing process, and now pre-drills each piece with a diamond bit so it can be worn. She's sold over 12,000 pieces of her glass to local and national suppliers. Lindy just loves to see people walking by with a necklace or earrings they've made using her Cathedral Jewels! She frequently demonstrates how she "rescues" the glass at local shops and galleries, and enjoys custom-making necklaces and earrings for visitors using Cathedral Jewels they pick out from her ever-growing collection.



Discovering the inner beauty of stained glass started Lindy on a healing journey. Helping the cracked pieces become valuable helped Lindy begin to feel whole again. Now she gets to share the wonder of these creations with friends and strangers.

Lindy Malin

Cathedral Jewels

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