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Material Girl Weaves Beloved Tradition with Fresh Look

By Carolyn Dobbe

Stepping into **Material Girl Fabric Shop**, the first thing you'll notice are the vibrant colors of every shade lining the walls, what appear to be miles upon miles of fabric in any imaginable texture or print. The overall impression is that of a farmstand market or a box of crayons; each color and fabric is distinct, yet all combine to dazzle the imagination with potential projects. **Material Girl Fabric Shop** has only recently celebrated its first year anniversary, yet many loyal customers have been shopping there for years and can't imagine going elsewhere for their fabric and sewing needs. Formerly known as "The Fabric Shop," the store was opened by Millie Gieseke in 1959 and thus became a veritable icon of Downtown Crystal Lake. With over fifty years of inventory and experienced employees, the shop was (and still is) an

invaluable resource to customers because it aims to be a full-service shop. Says Susie Fox, **Material Girl's** current owner and The Fabric Shop's former customer, "This store is such a gem I couldn't imagine seeing it go. "

The sale became a reality in March 2010, and after extensive remodeling, reopened in June of the same year. Fox has continued beloved traditions while bringing a fresh, innovative take on fabric. The inventory consists of Millie's vast selection with new brights and contemporaries, patterns, and trims. Most important to Fox is maintaining her customer's experience, providing the best service based on individual needs. Currently, **Material Girl** employs four former Fabric Shop employees each with their own strengths and specialties as well as years of experience. In addition to taking classes, or fixing their sewing machines, customers can bring in projects they're working on for a consultation or advice; in fact, the shop has begun to showcase photographs of proud customers with their finished product. "It's the type of individual service and attention you can't get at a big fabric warehouse," says Fox. The idea of customers as part of a community is what makes **Material Girl** a great example of what sets Downtown Crystal Lake shops apart from the rest.

With sewing machines in-store **Material Girl** looks ready to host a proverbial sewing circle, but you needn't worry if you aren't much of a quilter. The shop offers classes that are accessible to all skill levels and interests, and even offers birthday parties and field trips for non-sewers as young as five years! "More people are sewing these days, and realizing it's a great skill to learn," says Susie Fox. Customers can also get a group of friends together for private classes, individualized to their needs and projects. Class schedules (along with some other great info) can be found online at www.materialgirlfabricshop.com. **Material Girl** also works closely with high school and middle schools to provide fabric for various sewing classes. **July 21-24 brings Downtown Sidewalk sales**, so don't miss out on **Material Girl's** biggest sale of the year. Stop in today and wish the **Material Girl** team a happy one-year anniversary!

Additional Store Snapshots

