

Features

Most people have a junk drawer brimming with perfectly good scraps, buttons and material that have been tucked away and abandoned. Whether it is an earring missing the matching pair, a necklace that lost a gem, or a zipper from an old skirt, these items can be recycled and transformed into gifts for this holiday season.



Boxes crammed with these collectables are passed through generations. Dented tin boxes filled with retired items difficult to part with sit idly—shoved to the top of a closet shelf. Pretty hardware off of lingerie, pearls from a wedding dress, and charms from grandma’s keychain all sit in remission sealed with memories.

Leah Williams, owner and designer of Ruby Mae Jewelry, serves as a creative guru to recycle these nostalgic bits and pieces. Alone, these items do not have much monetary worth. Today, Williams’ jewelry designs focus on reinventing these frivolous objects into beautiful treasures.

“I think that we live in an uncertain, scary time and people want to be connected to their history and their heritage,” Williams says.

The crafty jewelry designer has been creating pieces of her own for about 20 years. Originally working exclusively with beaded jewelry, Williams discovered old buttons at Pearls, a vintage store located in Phoenix. While rummaging through the basket of buttons, Williams came across one engraved with the word “Caesar.”

“Caesar is the name of a dog I had just adopted,” Williams said. “For me, the button was sentimental and fun.”

Williams’ designs are timeless. While her fresh creativity is what attracts customers, Williams allows her clients to create pieces original to them. This unique spin on handmade jewelry allows people to stay connected to the items they value.



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Here are some fun suggestions from Williams to repurpose your own items into keychains or charms.

What you need

- Two jewelry pliers (Pliers should be smooth on the inside)
- Jump rings
- Keychain ring
- Lobster claw closure (This tool is used to attach charms to a necklace or keychain)
- Dangly earrings, charms from flip flops, buckles, pendants or any other funky item lying around.



Williams is also able available to make keychains and charms for people who are interested in using their own meaningful knick-knacks. Prices range from \$5-\$15, custom bracelets \$35-\$75

Join Williams Saturday, December 1 at Tempe High School in Tempe to purchase a unique piece of jewelry. Williams will also be available to make keychains and charms for people interested in integrating their own personal items into the design. The event will occur between 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m at 1730 S. Mill Avenue, Tempe, AZ, 85281. suzyfoundation.com