

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Candids with Emily Rose

Emily Munson

In a community built on connection, creativity, and resilience, few businesses embody those values as authentically as Candids With Emily Rose. Owned and operated by Emily Munson, the heart and talent behind the lens, this thriving photography studio has been named the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Year. For Emily, the recognition is both humbling and deeply affirming.

Growing up in a large family as a quadruplet, entrepreneurship was not something Emily was surrounded by. Yet today, she stands as a testament to what passion, perseverance, and purpose can build. "This gives me reassurance that I'm truly meant to be doing what I'm doing," she shared. "It tells me I'm doing something right." Beyond her photography studio, Emily has launched multiple ventures that support and uplift other businesses, reinforcing her commitment to helping others grow alongside her.

Emily's journey into photography began with a natural love for capturing memories. A self-described sentimental person, she always had a camera in hand. It was while working as a second shooter for another photographer that everything clicked. "I realized this is something I could really do," she said. "It's something I loved, and I had a talent for it." That realization sparked the creation of Candids with Emily Rose, a business rooted in authenticity and emotion.

Her signature style focuses on natural, unposed moments. While she guides clients when needed, Emily thrives in creating an environment where laughter, movement, and genuine connection take center stage. "I want to capture the real moments," she explained. "The ones where people are just being themselves." This approach has resonated deeply with clients, allowing her to build lasting relationships and a loyal following.

As a proud mother of twins, Emily brings a unique perspective to her work. Motherhood has strengthened her patience and deepened her appreciation for life's fleeting milestones. "If you don't have kids, you might not realize how important those little moments are," she said. Her children often accompany her to the studio, witnessing firsthand her dedication and creativity. "It's full circle. They see me as a role model, and that keeps me motivated."

Like many entrepreneurs, Emily faced challenges in the early stages of building her business. From securing materials to gaining visibility, the process required persistence and a strong mindset. "You have to start somewhere," she noted. "It's about continuing to push forward, always improving, always evolving." That mindset remains central to her success today.

Beyond her studio, Emily is deeply embedded in the local community. Based in Johnstown, she has received unwavering support from fellow businesses and residents alike. From referrals through CW Hair Design to collaborations with local organizations and non-profits, her network continues to grow. She has donated her time and talent to community events, offered free sessions to organizations in need, and consistently looks for ways to give back. "At the base of everything is my genuine heart," she said. "I just want to help people and see them smile."

What truly sets Candids with Emily Rose apart is Emily herself. Her approachable personality, flexibility, and commitment to her clients go beyond expectations. She does not limit sessions by strict timelines, ensuring she captures "the" photo rather than just "a" photo. She offers affordable pricing, works around busy schedules, and creates a welcoming, judgment-free space for everyone. "I want people to feel comfortable, no matter who they are or what they've been through," she said.

Community members echo this sentiment. Nominations highlighted her ability to make clients feel at ease, her generosity in offering affordable services, and her unwavering positivity. Many described her as a light in the community, someone who not only captures memories but creates meaningful experiences.

Looking ahead, Emily has ambitious goals. She envisions purchasing property to build a larger, multi-purpose studio with creative spaces designed to inspire both clients and collaborators. She also hopes to expand into travel and motivational speaking, blending her entrepreneurial journey with her passion for photography.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, Emily offers simple but powerful advice: choose something meaningful and take the leap. "Don't let fear hold you back," she said. "Find what works for you and go after it."

At its core, Candids With Emily Rose is more than a photography business. It is a space where stories are told, memories are preserved, and people are celebrated for exactly who they are. That mission, paired with Emily's unwavering dedication, makes her not only a deserving Small Business of the Year recipient, but a true community champion.

