



Being pampered at the Revlon stall.

Showcase for entrepreneurs

The long-awaited **Girlfriend's Expo and Arts Festival** weekend is officially over after attracting women of all ages to the Barbados Concorde Experience.

The expo has grown over the years to be more than just a relaxing and entertaining experience for women, and is also now an avenue for promising entrepreneurs.

Lynne Wright's business, Quote Totes, provides a unique design of special occasion gift bags. She prints quotes, gathered from the Internet, books and newspapers, on bags for events such as birthdays, **Valentine's Day** and Christmas.

She told **Barbados TODAY** that patrons passing her stall would read the quotes and laugh, and she thought it was a good thing to be able to make people smile.

"I absolutely enjoy this, it's very therapeutic . . . but it's hard work, especially coming up to a show," Wright said of her business which officially took off last year after she was inspired by young entrepreneurs who participated in the **\$20 Challenge**.

Fifteen-year-old Sara Rossidi and her best friend Emilie Ponse-Richards created their own line of natural hair care products because of the large number of synthetic products on the market. What started as a homemade remedy for their own hair struggles has become their own brand, Nature. This followed their participation in a project with the Barbados

Entrepreneurship Foundation three weeks prior.

Rossidi explained that they use organic products such as Vitamin E, Jojoba, Tea Tree and Extra Virgin Coconut oils in their products.

Fifty per cent of profits are donated to AMAR, a Middle Eastern charity targeting the women and children whose lives are ravaged by war, while 25 per cent goes to Barbados Cancer Support Services.

Go Baje Productions, a family business, was at the expo for the first time displaying African-inspired, locally made clothing, evening wear, hand bags, jewelry and gift cards for special occasions.

"It's been pretty good. People actually love the cards, they love the jewelry," Amour Chandler told **Barbados TODAY**. "Africa is a part of our roots and we need to remember where we come from so we'll know where we're going."

The business was started by Chandler's mother, Gwenocia Chandler, in 2003.

Debbie's Sweets and Treats, which specializes in allergy friendly cakes and pastries, was conceptualized by 28-year-old Deborah Butler when she was just a teenager.

She shared that her passion for baking began when she was about seven or eight years, after learning from her grandmother. Her first time at the show was in 2014.

"It has given Debbie's Sweet Treats

exposure to the wider public. They actually enjoy the treats that are healthy . . . It's healthy, yes, but it's still tasty," Butler said.

Some of the treats on display were banana nut bread made with green banana flour, dairy and egg-free chocolate cupcakes, and carrot cupcakes with cream cheese frosting.

Rozana Moseley has been at **Girlfriend's Expo** for three years and received a good response this year, even though she admitted it was a little slow.

Her clothing factory, La Rosa Couture, specializes in manufacturing a range of garments, from swimwear right up to bridal wear. After noticing a niche in Barbados, the factory now makes scarves, tops, skirts and dresses.

REI Makeup was started by Steffan Burgess in 2012 after he wanted to establish himself in the industry. After realizing there was a lack of models and makeup artists on the local scene, he founded the academy to train makeup professionals.

For his third year at the expo, Burgess allowed his past students to provide their services at different makeup stations, including eyebrow filling and shaping and full makeovers.

He had a word of advice to budding entrepreneurs: "If you have an idea, do some research and go for it, you're going to have challenges, but go for it."



Sara Rossidi with one of her Nature hair

Deborah Butler of Debbie's Sweets and Treats with her allergy free products.





A variety of items were available at the Go Baje Productions stall.



ir products.



Creative Quote Totes.



This patron gets a makeover from REI Makeup.