

A Multifaceted Life

BY NELLY EDMONDSON



Ann Ferrar

Carol-Jane (CJ) Segal-Isaacson, Ed.D., and her husband, Adam, crammed seven tables, four large jewelry cases and a mound of draperies into their Honda Fit one recent Sunday morning. Then they drove from Brooklyn to Greenwich Village to set up Dr. Segal-Isaacson’s jewelry booth at the Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit. Adam headed home to be with Samantha, the couple’s 15-year-old

daughter, until it was time to return and help pack things up.

For the past 10 years, Dr. Segal-Isaacson has led something of a double life. By day, the assistant professor of epidemiology & population health teaches nutrition science to Einstein medical students and collaborates on journal articles. Much of the rest of the time, she makes jewelry.

Sometimes her two worlds collide. “At a previous Washington Square exhibit,” she recalls, “I was all sweaty and grungy after setting up my booth and a young woman came by. Surprised to see me, she called out ‘Dr. Isaacson!’ Just the week before, I was teaching her nutrition and family medicine.”

Jewelry-making and her work at Einstein actually have much in common, she notes: “I don’t think there’s

that much difference between art and science. Both require creativity and problem-solving skills.”

In addition to spending about 45 days a year exhibiting at craft fairs, Dr. Segal-Isaacson often makes pieces on commission. She’s certainly not in it for the money, estimating she nets about \$2.50 an hour from her avocation. “When I sit down at my jewelry bench, I feel a tremendous peace,” she says. “It’s a Zen kind of thing.”

Dr. Segal-Isaacson first felt the urge to create jewelry when Samantha was

Above, Carol-Jane (CJ) Segal-Isaacson, Ed.D., left, with a customer.

Above right top, gold and silver baroque bracelet. Above right bottom, detail, red currant vine necklace.

Facing page: top, lapis cuff; center left, fossil talisman necklace; center right, winterberry bouquet earrings and necklace; bottom left, bronze ripple necklace; bottom right, silver wave necklace.

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five and they made a simple beaded necklace for Adam’s mother. “I found it frustrating to have to decide on the designs in the bead store,” says Dr. Segal-Isaacson. “I wanted to design things myself.” She jumped in with both hands, she says, when a friend started taking classes “and was making gorgeous stuff.”

Although she works mainly with gems and precious-metal wire, Dr. Segal-Isaacson also creates original cast-silver designs. And she’s still learning her craft. She is taking a class in gemstone setting and teaching jewelry-making from her home.

Connecting with her customers brings special enjoyment. “You put a piece of jewelry on someone, and you can see whether it works for or against that person,” says Dr. Segal-Isaacson. Is she reluctant to part with her hand-crafted pieces? “Not really,” she says. “You have to keep things moving to make them sparkle.” **E**



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