



WOOLLYBEAR TRAVELS



Melisa Beveridge
Woollybear Travels
San Luis Obispo, CA

Company Info: Woollybear Travels aims to make the world a better place for orphaned, injured, and rescued animals. Owner Melisa Beveridge travels the world providing vet tech services and creating unique artwork inspired by the animals she helps. A percentage of her revenue is donated to sanctuaries.

Melisa's entrepreneurial journey has not taken the most linear path. She has always had a love for animals and art which translated into various degrees in art, biology, science illustration, and veterinary technology. Although in retrospect, this path seems linear now, it wasn't until Melisa's car accident that she realized the possibilities of merging both passions into a business.

For 10 years Melisa dreamed of traveling the world to animal sanctuaries to nurse orphaned animals and create artwork inspired by them. It was the impact of a semi-truck to her car that helped this dream surface because it was the last thing that ran through her mind as she thought it was the end.

Her dream quickly took priority as she felt she was just given a second chance. Having worked as a freelancer for companies like National Geographic and dabbling in business trades with sanctuaries in Costa Rica and Mexico, Melisa began doing research on other possible opportunities.

Melisa has been traveling since 2018, and toured six different animal rescues around England, caring for various species including hedgehogs and donkeys. Even when she was back home on the Central Coast, she kept busy by visiting and volunteering at local sanctuaries.

In May 2019, she contacted the Women's Business Center for help. Like so many entrepreneurs, the most challenging obstacle was figuring out how to do it all on her own. She connected with several WBC Consultants including Christine Marie, an artist connected in the art community, and Lorelei Sibat, who became her biggest cheerleader yet. She found understanding and a team of professionals by her side.

She launched Woollybear Travels in January 2020 and flew to Zimbabwe. When the pandemic hit, she turned lemons into lemonade and sheltered there for six months nursing sick animals back to health and crafting one-of-a-kind artistic creations. Upon her return, she shifted gears and focused on working within the local art community.

Melisa has since hired an assistant, has plans to create a local sanctuary project, and in three years she strives to fully support herself with her business. Her best advice to emerging entrepreneurs is to, "Keep the people who support you really close." MCSC Women's Business Center is honored to be a partner for the life of Melisa's business.



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