



## A New Fiber Journey Begins

***Alpaca Fiber Designs ( AFD)*** is a **New, Innovative, Environmentally Friendly non-profit felting business** that is being developed in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. In collaboration with Bent Pine Alpaca Farm, Alpaca Fiber Designs is being created to employ individuals with disabilities in a customized integrated employment setting.

The success of this 501c.3 alpaca fiber business requires participation from many alpaca farms. We are asking alpaca farms to contribute their excess fiber to sustain this business. Many farms have stored fiber waiting for the right marketing opportunity. This project will expand awareness and use of alpaca fiber in a new innovated business setting.

The alpaca farms who participate in this community supported endeavor will be helping the expansion of the alpaca fiber industry while providing new employment opportunities for adults with disabilities.....a true win - win for everyone.

Throughout the United States customized employment is the desired work outcome for people with disabilities. Through the use of customized employment the jobs are matched to a person's interest, skills and strengths. Customized employment helps businesses, communities and for the individual-- the ability to pursue meaningful productive work in their field of interest. AFD is a perfect match for individuals who have a passion for working with animals; especially Alpacas. This will also be an ideal job for those who enjoy being creative and working with fibers and their hands. What a perfect opportunity, a match made in Alpaca heaven!!

United Cerebral Palsy of Central\_Pennsylvania (UCP) is assisting AFD in this new business start-up. UCP feels AFD will be a catalyst and business model to start alpaca felt training programs in other regions throughout the country. For the alpaca breeder, it will create a market for high quality felt products from the non-blanket fiber. This will provide new alpaca products to be sold within the local community and the general market place. The following are examples of products that will be made: sheets of felt, wine cozies, pet blanket and beds, shoe inserts, toys, plus much, much more. The options are as limitless as the imagination will allow.

We have the support and interest of many area businesses, nonprofits agencies and a local foundation that recognizes the importance of AFD's mission which is: *To provide an integrated customized employment setting to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities, empower individuals to achieve vocational independence, be contributing members of their communities and create high quality green products.*

This business opportunity is made possible due to the vision of Darwin and Doris Kell who continually open their home and hearts to those who are fortunate enough to cross their paths. My daughter Dana is one of the lucky ones to have been inspired by their love of Alpacas. She started volunteering on this farm over 5 years ago and it has been a life changing experience. It is one we will never forget and one we will be forever grateful has occurred in Dana's and our lives.



For additional information on how you can be part of Alpaca Fiber Designs journey, please visit our web site [www.alpacafiberdesigns.com](http://www.alpacafiberdesigns.com)

Lynn L. Shick, MSW,LSW

Parent of Dana Shick

