Focus On...
Shannon Lynch

According to Shannon Lynch, "It's like a core value, having pretty things around you."

Growing up, Shannon's family made regular trips to art museums. Her mother was a painter and sculptor, so art and creative expression were highly valued by the family. As a middle school principle, Shannon put her appreciation of art to work. She was aware that a lot of famous authors and artists, like Leonardo da Vinci, were scientists. Shannon explained, "So much of art is about balance and numbers and observation skills. It doesn't matter what medium you're in." She shared her appreciation of art with students by taking them to art museums.

When Shannon retired and settled in Green Valley, she enjoyed the arts center in her community. The center closed during summer when snowbirds flew back home. Shannon worked with administrative staff to keep it open year-round. Staff eventually denied the option of keeping it open during summer and suggested she look elsewhere for classes. She checked out two places but they were pretty 'cookie cutter.' That didn't interest Shannon.

Shannon found SGS through the glassblowing offer on Groupon.
She came, got a feel for the school, and never left.

"The school is very welcoming and the Tuesday group in the Warm Shop is super welcoming. If you go to Virgil with an idea or a project, he'll work it out and help you determine what the end result will be." Shannon enjoys the fellowship of the Tuesday group. "We're all so different. But the regulars come for friendship, support and encouragement. It's not limited to glass projects. It extends to family matters, health issues, whatever someone needs. Glass working has gone beyond fusing glass together."

Shannon first got interested in glass when she lived in the Pacific Northwest. There was a man who lived in a blue and orange house. He had decorative bird cages and miscellany in his yard. "It was funky," Shannon says. He made buttons, pendants (Shannon also called them donuts and lifesavers) from dichroic glass. At that time, what this man was doing wasn't conventional. Shannon spent a few days working with him. But Shannon moved away and for 25 years she searched for a way to make the same items but couldn't find the tools or resources needed.

When Shannon came to SGS, Laurie Schock was offering a class in dichroic glass. Laurie pulled out a slab of dichro and Shannon went to work trying to make what this man had made many years prior. While Shannon was making this slab everyone else in the class was working on little

pieces of pretty jewelry. Laurie had the tools and resources and together they got something that was fairly close.

Shannon has enjoyed photography and watercolors, but it was a fascination with dichroic glass that started her down a glass art path. "It was just so captivating, the colors and the sparkle and the three-dimensional aspect of it.

> **"I enjoy the school because you can kind of write your own ticket here. The staff really is dedicated to people that want to explore their creative side, whether it is a one-time flower or a bowl or a piece of jewelry. The staff is just so welcoming and open to anything you want to do.**

"If I couldn't come to SGS it would be devastating. It really would. It's just a tremendous resource. I would have to try, I think, and continue to create. You need a venue to meet people who are creators too. Some people try to make something and if they're unhappy with the end result they just go and buy one. The group I work with at SGS are like-minded in the sense that we make things because we really enjoy the process. Anytime you ask someone what they plan to do with their finished piece they say, 'I don't know. I haven't figured that out yet.' It's the type of group that whether they have something they're working on or are starting something new, they're here on a regular basis simply enjoying the process.

> **"I could still create if I couldn't come to SGS. I would probably get more done! But the friendships and relationships that have been built here are pretty irreplaceable."**