

Influential Women Spotlights Kerrie Mallory-Thompson: Co-Founder And CEO Of ThelmaLou Creations, LLC

SURPRISE, AZ, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Blending Creativity, Entrepreneurship, and Autism Advocacy to Create Inclusive Employment Opportunities and Empower Individuals Through Purpose-Driven Business

Kerrie Mallory-Thompson is proving that business can be a powerful vehicle for creating meaningful social change. As the Co-Founder and CEO of ThelmaLou Creations, LLC, and the Co-Founder of Empowered Prints, she has combined her lifelong passion for design with an unwavering commitment to expanding employment opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum.



What began as a creative business rooted in custom apparel and branded products has evolved into a mission-driven enterprise dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities develop valuable job skills, gain confidence, and achieve greater independence.

Based in Surprise, Arizona, Kerrie has spent years building a business founded on creativity, craftsmanship, and exceptional customer service. With a background deeply rooted in art, design, color, and hands-on learning, she developed her expertise through practical experience before launching ThelmaLou Creations in 2018. Her creative foundation was built through more than 25 years of experience in art, graphic design, production, and hands-on creative work, allowing her to combine technical skill with a strong understanding of visual storytelling and personalized design.

The company initially focused on custom apparel and product decorating, providing businesses, schools, nonprofit organizations, and community groups with branded merchandise, drinkware,

banners, signage, awards, and promotional products.

The story behind ThelmaLou Creations is also rooted in friendship, collaboration, and a shared commitment to the autism community. Kerrie founded the company alongside her longtime friend Pamela Lozada-Moore, creating a partnership that combined two unique areas of expertise. While Kerrie brought her extensive background in art, design, and production, Pamela contributed more than two decades of experience in special education and behavior analysis. Together, they created a foundation built around creativity, education, advocacy, and the belief that individuals with disabilities deserve opportunities to develop their strengths.

The name ThelmaLou represents more than a business identity—it reflects the friendship and shared mission between two women who came together through their connection to autism. Their partnership allowed them to create an organization focused not only on providing exceptional products but also on creating meaningful opportunities for individuals and families within the autism community.

As the business continued to grow, however, Kerrie recognized an opportunity to create something that reached beyond traditional entrepreneurship. Inspired by the journey of her son, Conor, who is on the autism spectrum, she began envisioning a business model that would address one of the greatest challenges facing individuals with disabilities: meaningful employment.

That vision became Empowered Prints.

Rather than simply creating another printing business, Kerrie established Empowered Prints with a clear purpose—to provide adults on the autism spectrum with practical job training, mentorship, and real-world work experience in a supportive environment. Through structured internship opportunities and supported employment, the organization equips participants with technical skills, workplace confidence, and the experience necessary to pursue long-term careers.

Through Empowered Prints, Kerrie and her team have developed a structured learning environment where individuals can gain hands-on experience across multiple areas of business operations. Participants have opportunities to develop skills in areas such as graphic design, marketing, e-commerce, social communication, purchasing, packaging, production, and other workplace responsibilities. This comprehensive approach allows interns to explore their strengths while developing practical skills that can translate into meaningful employment opportunities.

Her goal extends far beyond teaching production techniques. She is committed to helping individuals build independence, discover their strengths, develop professional confidence, and experience the dignity that comes with meaningful employment.

For Kerrie, Empowered Prints is not simply a training program—it is a pathway toward independence, confidence, and belonging. She believes that when individuals are provided with the right support, mentorship, and opportunities, they can achieve success in ways that challenge outdated assumptions about disability and employment.

Already, Empowered Prints has helped individuals transition into successful employment, and Kerrie continues working toward expanding those opportunities so that even more adults on the autism spectrum can benefit from inclusive workforce training.

In addition to leading both companies, Kerrie serves as Board President of the Autism Society of Greater Phoenix, where she advocates for individuals and families throughout the autism community. Her leadership reflects a lifelong commitment to improving opportunities and raising awareness while helping build more inclusive communities across Arizona.

Whether leading her businesses or serving the nonprofit community, Kerrie remains focused on one central mission: ensuring individuals with autism are recognized not for their limitations but for their talents, abilities, and tremendous potential.

For Kerrie, ThelmaLou Creations and Empowered Prints have always represented more than products and services. Behind every customized item is a larger purpose: creating opportunities, celebrating individuality, and demonstrating the value of inclusive employment. Each project represents creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to helping individuals with disabilities showcase their talents.

The inspiration behind that mission has always been deeply personal.

Kerrie attributes much of her personal and professional success to her son, Conor, and the profound impact he has had on her life. Watching his journey has strengthened her resilience, deepened her compassion, and given her an unwavering sense of purpose. His strengths, challenges, and unique perspective continually encouraged her to think differently, advocate more boldly, and pursue solutions that would benefit not only her own family but countless others facing similar circumstances.

Like many parents of children with disabilities, Kerrie found herself confronting difficult questions about the future. One concern weighed especially heavily on her mind: the disproportionately high unemployment rate among adults with disabilities.

As Conor grew older, she found herself wondering what opportunities would exist for him to work, contribute, and build an independent life. Rather than accepting those challenges as unavoidable, she chose to create the opportunities she hoped to see.

What began as a small side business and creative hobby gradually evolved into a much larger mission.

Through Empowered Prints, Kerrie has built an environment where individuals on the autism spectrum are recognized for their abilities rather than their diagnoses. Every internship, training opportunity, and employment experience reflects her belief that individuals with autism and other disabilities are capable, valuable members of the workforce who deserve opportunities that acknowledge their strengths and help them succeed.

Conor continues to inspire every aspect of her work, reminding her daily that meaningful change often begins with one family's determination to make the future better for others.

That same intentional approach extends into every aspect of Kerrie's professional leadership.

One of the most influential pieces of career advice she has ever received is deceptively simple: don't do anything stupid. While straightforward, Kerrie believes the advice has become one of the guiding principles behind her decision-making.

To her, it represents far more than avoiding mistakes. It is a reminder to pause before reacting, evaluate situations carefully, consider long-term consequences, and approach challenges with purpose instead of emotion.

This philosophy has helped shape her communication style, encouraging thoughtful conversations that build trust, strengthen relationships, and produce better outcomes. It has also influenced how she manages projects and leads her organizations.

Rather than rushing into action, Kerrie carefully defines objectives, anticipates potential obstacles, identifies the resources required for success, and relies on detailed planning to ensure projects remain organized and efficient. She believes preparation minimizes unnecessary setbacks while allowing teams to work more confidently and effectively.

Over time, this mindset has enabled her to make more strategic decisions while maintaining the integrity and professionalism that define her leadership.

As someone who has successfully built multiple businesses, Kerrie is passionate about encouraging other women pursuing careers in entrepreneurship, design, and marketing. She believes one of the most important lessons young women can learn is to trust their voices early in their careers.

Too often, talented professionals hesitate to share ideas or wait until they feel completely prepared before pursuing opportunities. Kerrie encourages women to contribute confidently, recognizing that their experiences and perspectives bring meaningful value to every organization. She also emphasizes the importance of developing genuine professional relationships.

While digital communication has transformed networking, Kerrie believes face-to-face conversations and one-on-one collaboration remain invaluable for building trust, strengthening partnerships, and creating opportunities that might never emerge online.

At the same time, she encourages continuous learning through webinars, virtual training, and online educational resources that allow professionals to develop new skills while maintaining balance between career and personal life.

She believes curiosity is one of the greatest competitive advantages anyone can possess.

Industries continue evolving rapidly, making adaptability and lifelong learning essential for sustained success. Rather than waiting until every skill has been mastered, Kerrie encourages professionals to embrace challenging opportunities, learn through experience, and recognize that confidence grows through action rather than hesitation.

Equally important, she encourages surrounding oneself with mentors, trusted colleagues, and supportive individuals who provide honest feedback while encouraging growth.

Above all, she reminds aspiring entrepreneurs never to lose sight of their purpose.

For Kerrie, every business decision ultimately connects back to creating opportunities for her son and countless others who deserve meaningful employment. She believes purpose provides resilience during difficult seasons while inspiring the persistence necessary to build something that creates lasting impact.

Within the custom printing and promotional products industry, Kerrie sees tremendous opportunities for continued growth.

Consumers increasingly seek personalized products that reflect individual stories, celebrations, and meaningful experiences rather than mass-produced items. That growing demand aligns naturally with the customized work produced by both ThelmaLou Creations and Empowered Prints.

Rapid advances in printing technology have also expanded creative possibilities far beyond traditional apparel.

Today, businesses can produce customized products using wood, acrylic, metal, and numerous other materials, opening entirely new markets while allowing companies to serve broader customer needs.

Despite these opportunities, Kerrie recognizes that the industry has become increasingly competitive. The rise of print-on-demand platforms has significantly lowered barriers to entry, making it easier than ever for new businesses to enter the marketplace. Standing out now

requires much more than technical capability. Success depends on exceptional quality, outstanding customer service, consistent branding, and a mission customers genuinely believe in. Kerrie believes Empowered Prints possesses exactly that distinction.

The company exists not simply to manufacture customized products but to transform lives through employment. Every order placed contributes to creating meaningful opportunities for individuals with disabilities while demonstrating what inclusive employment can accomplish. Customers are not only purchasing products—they are supporting workforce development, strengthening families, and helping create more inclusive communities. That purpose remains central to everything Kerrie builds.

Three values continue guiding every decision she makes: purpose, integrity, and impact.

Purpose provides direction for both her businesses and her personal life. Every initiative Kerrie pursues is centered on creating opportunities that improve lives while building something meaningful for her family and community.

Integrity serves as the foundation for how she conducts business. She believes in honesty, honoring commitments, treating people with respect, and consistently choosing the right path even when it requires greater effort.

Impact completes that foundation.

Kerrie wants every product, every partnership, every internship, and every employment opportunity to leave a positive and lasting difference. Whether helping someone secure meaningful work, supporting a family navigating autism, or creating customized products that celebrate important milestones, she believes businesses should positively influence the people they serve.

Looking ahead, Kerrie remains committed to expanding both ThelmaLou Creations and Empowered Prints while creating employment opportunities for an even broader network of individuals on the autism spectrum.

Her long-term vision extends beyond growing successful businesses. She hopes to help redefine what inclusive employment looks like by demonstrating that individuals with autism possess remarkable talent, dedication, creativity, and capability when given the opportunity to succeed.

Through entrepreneurship, advocacy, and servant leadership, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson continues transforming personal inspiration into lasting community impact. By combining creativity with compassion and business success with social purpose, she is building more than thriving companies—she is creating pathways toward independence, dignity, and opportunity for individuals who have too often been overlooked, proving that meaningful businesses can strengthen communities while changing lives for generations to come.

Learn More about Kerrie Mallory-Thompson:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/kerrie-mallorythompson> or through her website, <https://www.thelmaloucreations.com/>

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