

Hometown Author Returns to Newark for Bookstore Grand Opening

Shelli Netko returns home for the August 29 grand opening of Jolene's Bookstore in downtown Newark.

NEWARK, OH, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For one woman, it began with notebooks filled with stories. For the other, it began with a dream of creating a bookstore where stories could bring people together.

On August 29, those two dreams come together in downtown Newark as [Shelli Netko](#) returns home for the grand opening of Jolene's Bookstore.

Newark is where Netko's story with writing began, long before she could have imagined where it would take her. As a girl, she filled notebooks with stories and dreamed of places she'd never been. Now, she returns to the same hometown as a [bestselling author](#) and founder of Heart-to-Heart Collective, an independent publishing house.

For owner Megan Basinger, Jolene's is about creating more than a place to buy books. She hopes it becomes a home away from home—a place where people can slow down, connect, and enjoy a good story.

"I want Jolene's to feel like everyone's store," Basinger said. "Featuring hometown authors is important because local authors represent our voices, inspire future writers, and strengthen the sense of community that makes Newark so special."

Netko will meet readers and sign books throughout the August 29 grand opening at Jolene's Bookstore, 5 South Third Street in downtown Newark. The day begins with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. and continues until 6 p.m.



Hometown author Shelli Netko with Megan Basinger, owner of Jolene's Bookstore in downtown Newark, Ohio.

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This isn't just a homecoming—it's two dreams coming together in the town where my story began.”

Shelli Netko

"Somewhere inside me, I'm still that twelve-year-old girl filling notebooks with stories, never imagining where that might someday lead," Netko said. "Every writer has a place where the dream begins. Mine began in Newark. To come home and see Megan Basinger's dream become a reality in the same town where mine began is the kind of full-circle moment I never could have imagined."

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