



Every company has heroes who work behind the scenes and at *pcPolyzine* that person is Katie Krushinski. In addition to maintaining the databases of regional polymer clay guilds and the *pcPolyzine* members mailing list, Katie makes herself available at a moment's notice to test a technique submitted for publication, create samples to be photographed at the last minute, and serve as a 24-hour sounding board for the *pcPolyzine* publisher (me). She accomplishes these tasks with an enthusiastic spirit and good sportsmanship. She never complains (that I can hear her) and always hands in meticulous, professional, and accurate work always on time.

My first professional encounter with Katie was when she was just three years old and assisted me in my home-based radio syndication and media business. She matched invoices to mailing labels, stuffed and labeled envelopes, and showed me how to "sort by zip code," a technique she had seen on television. By the time she was five, she single-handedly sent out 200+ faxes to radio stations when I was too sick to send them myself (this was back in the fax/modem days of the early 1990s). Needless to say, her work ethic and professional approach met and exceeded that of many adults.



Katie made her first polymer clay bead at age 6. I had just returned from a trip to Mangelsen's (a large craft company in Omaha, Nebraska) with several packages of the amazing art product. The folks at Mangelsen's dazzled me with a strand of faux malachite beads, and I was eager to try this technique at home. Unfortunately, a case of jet lag erased my memory and I couldn't quite describe the bead making process to Katie. No problem. With a twist here and a smooch there, Katie showed me just how easy it is to create with polymer clay. Here are some of our earliest beads.

After that, Katie and I worked and played together and made hundreds of beads and a lot of necklaces. It was fun to make jewelry, but even more fun to sell it. We spent weekends traveling to community craft shows making a few extra bucks with our polymer clay creations.



Today, Katie is an accomplished young woman on the verge of turning 18 and graduating from high school in May. She works part-time at a pet store and has held increasingly responsible positions at veterinary clinics. She is a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator and enjoys raising and caring for a houseful of pets, especially her beloved Sugar Gliders.

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Editor's note: Ten years have passed since we introduced Katie to the *pcPolyzine* family of readers. Today, Katie is the Training and Communication Coordinator at NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center (DRC), Office of Response and Restoration in Mobile, Alabama. She is working on a Master's Degree in Emergency Management. She was on the team from Springfield, Missouri that deployed to Joplin in 2011 following the devastating EF5 tornado. Between work and school -- and caring for her menagerie of pets -- Katie has little time for polymer clay pursuits. But she did find time to make a leaf pendant out of Precious Metal Clay (PMC3). Those polyclay skills really pay off!

