

Small Business

Free \$\$\$ for entrepreneurs

Unleashing artistic talent

Young Monster

Chattanooga, Tenn.

Nick DuPey was a painter and musician working in graphic design and marketing. His passion, though, was creating posters -- elaborate works of art -- for the many bands that came through Chattanooga to perform. DuPey, 30, and two artist friends, Zach Hobbes and Scott Campbell, wanted to open a screen-printing shop that would operate as a cooperative, where they could help bands design and create their own t-shirts, posters and CD sleeves. The need for startup money though, caused them to rethink their model. They decided to start a for-profit business.

DuPey turned to CreateHere

[<http://www.createhere.org>], a nonprofit established in 2007 to provide resources and funding for Chattanooga entrepreneurs in the arts and creative fields. In 2007, the organization gave out \$150,000 in grant money; in 2008 it doubled that. So far, CreateHere has given grants to 60 individuals. Grantees are required to go through "sustainability sessions" to help them create a viable business plan.



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In April, CreateHere made an \$11,000 grant to DuPey and his partners, who also got cheap office space in a local business incubator. The lion's share of the money went to rent and materials. "That grant was a pipe dream when we applied, and it was what enabled us to get the business off the ground," DuPey says.

Although the business isn't yet supporting DuPey or his partners, who do other work on the side, it is now generating enough money to sustain itself.

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