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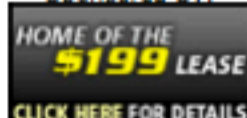
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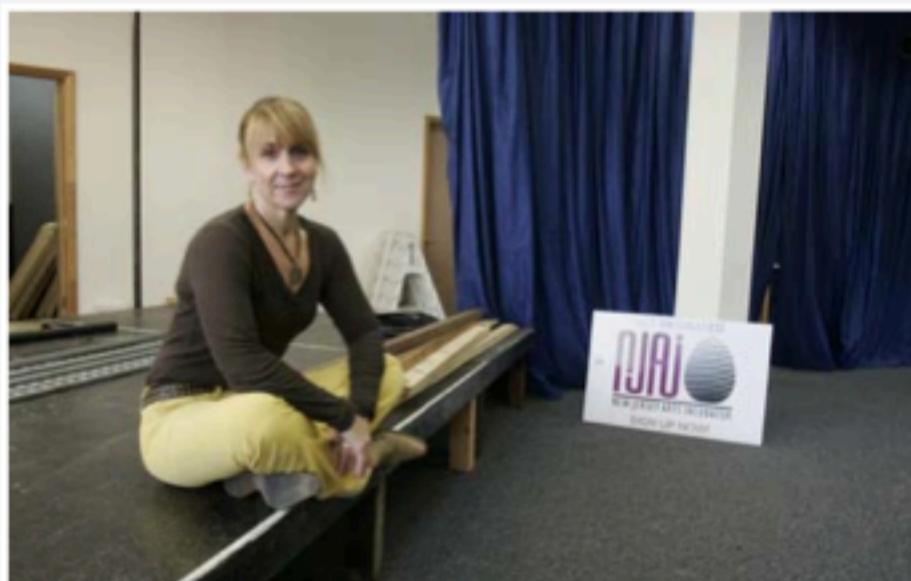
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### West Orange artists look to business for help, inspiration

By Halley Bondy/For The Star-Ledger  
October 19, 2009, 6:26PM

WEST ORANGE -- After watching arts funding dwindle for years, a West Orange resident decided that artists need to monetize themselves.

"I wanted to create a place where we could implement small business strategies, like you would in a business incubator," said arts advocate Amy Simon. "Survival is only through a business strategy."



Alexandra Pais/New Jersey Local News Service

Amy Simon, executive director, of the newly created New Jersey Arts Incubator studio in West Orange.

On Saturday, Simon will open the New Jersey Arts Incubator, a 6,000-square-foot space for musicians, painters, writers and artists to learn business savvy and display their work.

The incubator is located temporarily in a storefront building--formerly Marty's Shoes Outlet in the Essex Green shopping center on Prospect Avenue--until it moves to a more permanent space in West Orange.

The building includes a theatre and a gallery, and will host performances, workshops, and seminars on grant-writing, digital streaming and other business topics. Classes will cost between \$25 and \$65.

Simon, an actress and writer who runs a public relations firm, said she hopes that after two years of participating in the incubator, artists will be financially independent.

"We hope that the artists will be financially stable with business plans," Simon said. "How rare is that in this economy?"

The incubator will be open to talent outside of West Orange, but the town is particularly in need of the space, according to West Orange council president Lisa Suss.

"There is a large arts community here that people don't really know about,

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