

A Chat With Our Newest Designer, Ileana Russell (AKA [I Scrap Designs](#))!

by Jan Bryson, [Sam & Hailey Designs](#)



JAN: Ileana, we got to learn a lot of really interesting facts about you during the Customer Appreciation Day Fact or Fiction Challenge, but tell us what started you down the path of creating digital designs for cutters?

ILEANA: I had been scrapping for about 8 years when I discovered the Wishblade. Knowing that my husband always gives me jewelry for every holiday, birthday, and anniversary and that our 10th anniversary was approaching, I asked for a cutter for our anniversary. I thought it would take a lot of work to convince him. He surprised me by getting it a whole year early.

JAN: I love the files you have in the store, where do you get your inspiration from?

ILEANA: A lot of different places. One of my most recent designs, the Stained Glass Hexagon actually comes from a page I painstakingly created years ago using

my son's first professional photo. It is hanging in my living room. I was taking a breather from cleaning the other day and happened to take a close look at it. While I still love it, I saw my mistakes and then I realized, I know I can make that again without all the mistakes and a whole lot easier courtesy of my cutter.

JAN: If an idea hits you in the middle of the grocery store, what do you do?

ILEANA: I try to work on my ideas as soon as possible. If I can't, I'll sketch or write them down. Sometimes, I'll bounce my ideas off my husband. Sometimes he helps; sometimes he laughs.

JAN: Since you've been scrapping for so long, what is your favorite subject to scrapbook?

ILEANA: My family. Besides recording our lives and special events, I try very hard to make my scrapbooks educational for my children. If something were to happen to me, I'd like my kids to be able to look to our scrapbooks and pick up on what we value and what we hope for them as well as how much we love them.

JAN: Can you tell me about a scrapbooking project that you've worked on that you feel especially passionate about?

ILEANA: My husband's military album. It not only documents my husband's achievements and experiences as an Air Force Reservist but also delineates some of the good things he was able to do while he was deployed in the Middle East. As a Medical Service Corp Officer, he is responsible for coordinating the evacuation of our wounded as well as running any mass-casualty incidents and helping out around the base hospital as he can. Among other things, he has held the hands of our troops as they passed away and cared for Iraqi children who were injured by suicide bombers or tortured by Saddam's henchmen. I have great reason to be proud of him and hope my children will be as well.



JAN: That's an amazing project! Thanks for being willing to share it with us. Just curious, what was your last "off-computer" project?

ILEANA: I made a couple of Christmas cards that actually did not use my Wishblade. I used some of my stash and proved to myself I can still create things "the old fashioned way."

JAN: Give us a peek inside your crafting area... What's on your desk or workspace right now?

ILEANA: Piles. We're getting ready to move so I'm doing a lot of de-cluttering and organizing. I tend to collect all kinds of stuff because of the possibility of using it somehow. I once made a new baby card using a part of one of my daughter's Barbie dresses that she had torn. The pink sparkly tulle was beautiful and I just couldn't resist.

JAN: What was the last papercrafting tool you purchased?

ILEANA: A KNK! I just had to take advantage of Michelle's sale right now. I was going to wait until after we moved but the sale was too good to let it pass by me.

JAN: Since you're a "Pro" now, what advice would you give to new cutter owners who are just getting their cutters out of the box?

ILEANA: Take baby steps. Getting a cutter is extremely exciting but just like anything that is worthwhile, it takes time to learn and master. With a bit of patience and practice, every new cutter owner will become a pro in no time.