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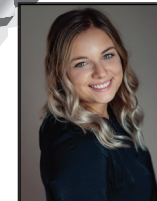
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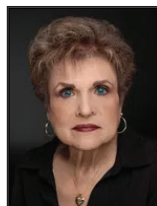
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GENEVA — The opportunity to interact with other business owners is important for any entrepreneur, but can be especially critical for women finding their way in business.

Downtown Geneva has an especially large concentration of women who are business owners or co-owners. In addition to the Geneva Downtown Business Association for all business owners, the area has an association for women business owners, of which Amanda Briggs-de Lavini is president.

She is also co-owner of Darkroom Brewer on North Broadway in downtown Geneva.

"Many [women] are co-owners, but also lead the day-to-day administration of the business," Briggs-de Lavini said. "For my situation, my husband/co-owner still works a full-time job to ensure we have insurance during our startup years, and I run the brewery for daily operations. We work together at the brewery on the weekends.

"I have looked to other women business owners for guidance, advice and as a sounding board for many things and have never been turned away by this community," Briggs-de Lavini said.

Knowing where business owners can find helpful resources is important, she said.

"I'm excited to see the downtown's growth, and know that our success as business owners comes on the shoulders of the hardworking women and advocates before us," Briggs-de Lavini said. "Only 50 years ago, a woman could not have a mortgage or credit card without her husband's permission. I hope we can acknowledge how far



Photos by Warren Dillaway | Star Beacon

Quinn Maker, owner of Lake Erie Book Company in downtown Geneva, displays some of her books at the store that has been open for just under a year.



Amanda Briggs-de Lavini, co-owner of Darkroom Brewing Company in downtown Geneva, displays one of her products at the brewery on North Broad Street.

we've come as well as the challenges ahead and work together to make our individual businesses [and therefore our downtown] a thriving and diverse community."

Linda Priebe, owner of Wellness Through Balance, said it was helpful that many women reached out to her.

"Other women in business locally have introduced themselves and welcomed us," she said. "They offered information and ideas to help us, and wished us success."

Priebe said she has enjoyed all things healthy and natu-

ral, and strived to live her life in such a way to enhance her health.

Priebe said she was supported by the city zoning department, which was very welcoming.

Many people have reached out and been kind and encouraging as Priebe has established her business at 29 West Main St., she said.

"There are many ways to achieve goals, and there is so much technology at our disposal," Priebe said. "We have

See **GENEVA** on 12

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN BUSINESS: Raegan Hagerdon of Assured Real Estate

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In the competitive landscape of real estate, few names resonate with trust and excellence like Raegan Hagerdon, the Owner and Broker of Assured Real Estate.

Founded in 2017, her brokerage has rapidly established itself as a formidable presence in the industry, driven by Raegan's unwavering commitment to core values such as dedication, transparency, and integrity. Her leadership style not only inspires her brokerage but also fosters a supportive environment where everyone thrives.

Located at 38 S. Chestnut St. in Jefferson, Assured Real Estate has developed a profound appreciation for the beauty and potential of Ashtabula County. Under Raegan's guidance, the firm has emerged as a powerhouse known for delivering exceptional quality and remarkable results across a diverse range of properties, including commercial, residential, vacant land, and farmland. Their mission is clear: to provide expert real estate support, local market insights, and personalized service tailored to meet each client's unique needs. With a commitment to assisting clients through every aspect of buying and selling, Assured Real Estate offers complimentary market analyses to estimate home values and collaborates closely with lenders, local inspectors, and appraisers to ensure seamless transactions from start to finish.

Recently, Assured Real Estate celebrated a heartfelt milestone as Raegan welcomed her family into the brokerage. Her husband Bryan, their son Brandon, and daughter-in-law, Emily have all earned their real estate licenses. This expansion not only strengthens the collaborative spirit of our brokerage but also enriches the experience for our clients. We're excited for you to meet them! With this addition, Assured now consists of 26 dedicated Realtors. We are proud of the incredible group of professionals within our brokerage, everyone supports and encourages one another, creating a truly uplifting environment. Be sure to stay tuned for our upcoming videos, where we'll highlight each agent's unique talents and their contributions to our shared mission.

Assured Real Estate serves as the exclusive brokerage for the Luxury Motorcoach Resort, Lake Eries Shores, providing unparalleled services to its clients. Additionally, they have recently expanded with a new office in Andover, managed by a dedicated associate broker, April Howard. Raegan and April have also earned their Pennsyl-



vania licenses, enabling them to effectively serve clients in that area and further their reach.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Raegan is profoundly dedicated to giving back to the community, a commitment shared by everyone at Assured Real Estate. This brokerage consistently steps up to volunteer their time, donate to local nonprofit organizations, sponsor families during the Christmas season, and engage in a variety of charitable initiatives. Their readiness to lend a hand reflects their belief in making a positive impact in the community they serve.

Raegan Hagerdon's journey is a testament to the impact women can have in business! Her commitment to fostering a supportive work environment, prioritizing client relationships, and giving back to the community exemplifies the essence of female leadership in today's marketplace.

As Assured Real Estate continues to grow, Raegan and her agents are eager to showcase the fantastic developments within the brokerage and the community at large. The future is bright, and with Raegan at the helm, Assured Real Estate is poised to make an even greater impact in the real estate industry.

For expert advice and valuable insights into the local market, don't hesitate to reach out. Assured Real Estate "Bridges the Gap Between Buyers and Sellers." Call our office at (440) 576-SELL or visit our website to explore our current listings at <https://assuredrealestateoh.com>

Biscotti's a long-time part of Conneaut scene

CHRISTOPHER GILLETT

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CONNEAUT — Biscotti's Restaurant has become a signature business in the city's port district.

Located at 186 Park Ave., the restaurant primarily serves Italian food. It opens at 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturday, and at the same time Sundays May through December.

"So 26 years ago, my husband told me that he bought a restaurant, and that was a surprise to me," Biscotti's owner Lori McLaughlin said.

The couple worked with her brother-in-law before buying him out.

"Seven-and-a-half years ago, my husband passed, and it's been mine ever since," McLaughlin said. "I've been the sole owner since, and it's been quite an adventure."

McLaughlin said her time as sole owner has been busy, because everything is now on her shoulders.

"I'm the one that meets all the contractors, makes the decisions," she said. "I do rely on my staff to help me find if there's an issue, [and] be the eyes and ears for me as well."

McLaughlin said she had previous experience in management before running Biscotti's.

"What I didn't know was the hospitality end of it," she said. "I didn't know the safety and sanitation. I didn't know any of the actual food business part of it."

McLaughlin earned her business degree from Kent State University Ashtabula at the same time she was learning to run Biscotti's.

"I would say to anyone, take business classes," she said. "Make sure you know

your human resources laws, so you don't mess those up. Those are very important. You can get sued if you don't do the right things."

Any business owner is responsible for the success of their business and knowing the law around running it, McLaughlin said.

"It's all on you," she said.

McLaughlin has developed a great relationship with her customers, staff and the surrounding community, she said.

"I have long-term employees that are engaged and care as much as I do about the restaurant, but I am the one that has to take obviously the ownership," she said.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a challenging situation for Biscotti's, McLaughlin said.

"Takeout was not a huge part of the restaurant, and then it was obviously the only part of the business at that point when COVID hit," she said.

McLaughlin said customer support played a huge role in the restaurant's survival through the pandemic.

"They knew that the mom'n'pops of the world were [more] important to them than corporate businesses, and they became more engaged in family businesses, and they wanted to support family businesses more than ever," she said.

Many customers have fond memories of the restaurant, McLaughlin said.

"They had their first meals here as kids, and they are now having their first meals with their children here," she said. "They had their rehearsal dinners. They had their engagements here. They had special memories made here, their first dates, their homecomings. When that evolves, that is so special me, and that is exciting."

The restaurant has evolved and McLaughlin said she con-



Photos by Christopher Gillett | Star Beacon

Biscotti's Restaurant owner Lori McLaughlin, right, and Ella Boroski, a server at the restaurant for six years, stand at the front desk of the restaurant recently.

siders many customers and staff to be family.

"I have customers who come here every six months. They drive through [Conneaut]," she said. "They're going from their home in Chicago to their home in Maine."

Many people come from Pennsylvania, McLaughlin said.

"The Pennsylvania 814 area code is always on our reservation sheets, every single day," he said.

McLaughlin said reservations are not needed, but she would prefer them in case the restaurant is busy.

"If you're going to drive any distance, we'd love to have a table waiting for you," she said.

Alongside Biscotti's,

McLaughlin is heavily involved with D-Day Conneaut, serving as COO for D-Day Ohio, the non-profit that oversees the event.

When D-Day Ohio reached out to city leaders through the local American Legion, McLaughlin said she organized a meeting at Biscotti's.

"I was extremely pleased with the turnout," she said. "It was like 15-20 people that met, and we all took on roles after that. A lot of them stayed in the organization for 10-12 years after that."

Conneaut has a great small business community, McLaughlin said.

"Almost all the restaurants help each other," she said. "They're willing. Nobody wants anybody to fail. It's



Cathy Gebhardt, a hostess at Biscotti's Restaurant for over 15 years, sets a table recently.

true, and it's wonderful."

McLaughlin said other aspiring business owners should not be afraid to reach

out for help or advice when they need it.

"That is my advice, truly," she said.



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Ann Wiley, Zac Freeman, Toni Tulajew-Spahr, Jill Freeman

Wiley Insurance Services Guides Seniors Through the Health Insurance Maze

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CONNENAUT — As if insurance wasn't complicated enough for senior citizens, questions surrounding Medicare Insurance options including Medicare Advantage Plans, Supplement Plans (Medigap) and Prescription drug plans can be confusing and sometimes overwhelming. In addition, we see TV ads promising the world, receive endless illegal phone calls and misinformation which can take anxiety to a whole new level. On top of all that, the Annual Enrollment Period is coming up from Oct 15-Dec 7. This is the time when Medicare eligible beneficiaries can review their current plans and make any needed changes for the upcoming year.

Your current plan should be sending information on how benefits will be changing, and you will probably receive an overwhelming amount of mail from other companies trying to solicit your business.

Please be aware that NO insurance company or agent, that you are not already doing business with, is allowed to call you unless have given them permission them to do so. By going to a website or returning an information request card in the mail you may be inadvertently giving someone permission to contact you. Furthermore, with a few limited exceptions, starting October 1st Medicare regulations state that the agent must have a signed scope of appointment form 48

hours before they call or meet with you indicating what you would like to discuss on the call or at the appointment.

For 41 years Ann Wiley has matched people with the policies that meet their individual needs. In addition to Ann Wiley, Wiley Insurance has three agents who are licensed to assist seniors: Zachary Freeman, Jill Freeman and Toni Tulajew-Spahr. Wiley Insurance has offices in Conneaut, Ashtabula, Jefferson and Cortland and they are licensed to assist beneficiaries in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida. They represent 19 different companies and 97 products including Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage Part C Plans, Part D Drug Plans, Life Insurance, Dental, Vision, Cancer, other

ancillary products and indemnity plans. They are also available to help individuals with Marketplace and Short Terms plans for those under 65 wishing to retire prior to being eligible for Medicare Insurance.

They specialize in Medicare related products and under 65 health insurance, but they also assist clients with applying for Social Security Benefits, Medicare, Medicaid and the Low-Income Subsidy for Part D as well as IRA and 401K transfers.

Wiley Insurance has more than 3900 clients but is available to meet with people individually on a personal basis to explain their options, answer questions, and help navigate their coverage. They do an annual review to make

sure the plan clients are currently on will still be the best option for the coming year. To help inform the population, they conduct seminar for individuals as well as companies with employees are nearing retirement.

Seniors' choices have expanded in the last several years from Medicare Supplements and a drug plan to the Medicare Advantage Plans that may offer additional dental, vision, hearing and over the counter benefits. Both options are available and while everyone's situation is different, Wiley Insurance is available to help you find a plan that will best fit your individual needs. The personal service doesn't stop when they sign you up. They are local and just a phone call

away.

Continuing education is a big part of their professional life. Not only do they need to complete 24 hours of continuing education every 2 years, each agent must also pass an annual certification on a national level and complete certification training with each company on each product they represent.

Wiley Insurance Services is located at 400 Detroit St, Conneaut; 3705 State Rd., Ashtabula, Jefferson Community Center, 11 E Jefferson St, Jefferson and 3470 Warren Meadville Rd, Cortland. They can be reached at 440-599-7559 and www.awileyinsurance.com. All offices are by appointment only.



ANN WILEY



JILL FREEMAN



TONI TULAJEW-SPAHR



Warren Dillaway | Star Beacon

Bretteny Berrier, owner of Harrison's Doggie Spa in Jefferson, right, runs the dog grooming business in downtown Jefferson. She interacts with Jill Carle and her dog Dino after a recent grooming

Berrier grows business in downtown Jefferson

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JEFFERSON — Dog grooming is a labor of love for Bretteny Berrier, owner of Harrison's Doggie Spa.

"It's been very good, business is booming," Berrier said of the location she opened in March 2021 in a building across the street from her mother and sister's business, the Refindary Vintage Market.

Berrier received good counsel from her mother as she began the operation and watched it grow.

There were so many dogs purchased or rescued during the coronavirus pandemic that owners needed a place for them to receive proper grooming, Berrier said.

A connection with owners — and the dogs — is key to the business. That was recently demonstrated as a customer returned for her dog and a relationship was clear with the people and dog.

"We have expanded into dog treats," Berrier said of a varied set of options available for dog lovers. Presently the store is open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday, but plans are for the business to be open on Mondays as well at the start of the new year.

She said the Jefferson Area Chamber of Commerce was very helpful in assisting her as she started the business.

"They are all about promoting businesses," Berrier said.

Berrier said she would encourage women busi-

ness owners to talk to other women who have blazed the trail before them.

"There is definitely a lot of opportunities there for support," she said.

Working on community projects has been important to Berrier. She is active in the Jefferson Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization and was president of the Jefferson Depot Village until her resignation in July, when the hours involved became too extensive.

Berrier said she has always had a love of dogs, so the business was a natural connection for her personality and skill set.

"Each dog is different. They all have unique personalities," she said of the animals she works with regularly.

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Angela Kendall: Building Businesses, Empowering People, and Giving Back

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When Angela Kendall founded Elite Employment Center in 2010, her vision was simple but powerful — to connect hardworking people with meaningful employment while helping local companies grow. Fifteen years later, that vision has become a cornerstone of Ashtabula County's workforce. Elite Employment has proudly placed nearly 40,000 local candidates, supporting employers across Northeast Ohio with dependable staffing solutions and a personal touch that larger agencies often lack.

"We're not just filling jobs — we're changing lives," Kendall says. "When someone walks through our doors, they're trusting us with their future. That means everything to me."

Under her leadership, Elite Employment has earned numerous honors, including the Business Excellence Award from the Ashtabula Chamber of Commerce and a decade-long streak as the Star Beacon Readers' Choice "Best Employment Agency." From temporary assignments to full-time careers, Kendall's team continues to make a lasting impact, one placement at a time.

The Kendall Foundation: Giving Back, One Gift at a Time

A natural extension of her heart for people, Kendall launched The Kendall Foundation in 2020 — in the middle of a global pandemic — to support smaller organizations and individuals in need. What began as a local effort to lift struggling families has grown into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has now donated more than \$550,000 to the community.

Under the leadership of Alyssa Donato, The Foundation has supported local schools, veterans, the homeless, and youth programs — and even contributed \$57,000 toward the construction of the Seidman Cancer Center in Conneaut. Signature events like "Deck the Halls" and "Trunk-or-Treat" have become beloved community traditions, raising both funds and spirits.

"This work is personal for us," Kendall shares. "When you're blessed, you give back — and that's exactly what we do."

Author, Mother, and Mentor

Beyond the boardroom, Angela is also a children's book author with two titles available on Amazon: *This Day* (2017), a heartfelt reminder to cherish time, and *A New Day*:



Kindergarten is Here! (2021), a sweet and encouraging story for families sending little ones off to school for the first time.

Her writing, much like her business and philanthropic work, centers on family, growth, and gratitude. "My books are love letters to parents and kids — reminders to slow down, celebrate the moments, and be present," she explains.

Continuing the Journey

Never one to stand still, Kendall is now embarking on her next entrepreneurial chapter — bringing a newly patented invention to market after being awarded a utility patent in January 2025. Though details remain under wraps, the project reflects her passion for innovation and problem-solving.

"Every venture I've taken on has started with the same spark — seeing a need and creating a solution," Kendall says. "This next chapter is about blending creativity with purpose, and I can't wait to share more soon."

A Legacy of Leadership

From running a thriving staffing agency to founding a charitable foundation, writing books, and now inventing something entirely new, Angela Kendall embodies the spirit of perseverance, creativity, and compassion. Her story is a reminder that success doesn't happen overnight — it's built through years of dedication, integrity, and heart.

"I've learned that every season of life brings new opportunities to serve, to grow, and to inspire others," Kendall says. "That's what being a woman in business means to me."



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The Light Emporium Offers Rare and Vibrational Stones and Minerals

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Shari Lynn has spent the past 35 years deeply rooted in the field of Metaphysics, dedicating her life to exploring the nature of consciousness, energy, and spiritual evolution. As the owner of a spiritual jewelry store, The Light Emporium where she offers rare and high-vibrational stones and minerals such as Moldavite and Sentient Quartz Crystals that support healing, activation, and transformation.

Shari holds a deep passion for assisting others on their path to health, self-discovery, and living in alignment with the Truth of who they are. Having studied with numerous masters in the fields of self-help, quantum mechanics, and energetic healing, she has synthesized her knowledge into powerful healing technologies.

She is the creator of the **Pleiadean Cosmic Healing Discs**—Full Spectrum Healing Tools that work with Light and Frequency to assist in releasing emotional, sexual, and past-life trauma. These tools have reached the hands of healers and starseeds across the United States, as Shari has traveled the country sharing her work, knowledge, and inspiration at many of the nation's largest spiritual and holistic expos.

Through her lectures, jewelry, and healing tools, Shari continues to uplift and empower those who are awakening to their true essence and soul purpose.

"It is wonderful to be back at the top of the hill on Bridge Street in the Historic Ashtabula Harbor!" says Shari Lynn, who, along with her fiancé, **Reiki Master Dino Mauri**, opened **The Light Emporium** in January 2023. "After the COVID pandemic, we felt it was essential to bring a spiritual safe haven to our community."

Peace and Light define the atmosphere of *The Light Emporium*. "We assist others in discovering the healer within," says Shari.



"We offer ongoing Reiki classes, workshops with inspired alternative healers, and sessions with some of the most respected readers in the business."

Some may remember **The Silver Branch**, which was located on Bridge Street from May 2004 until late 2013. "I am more grounded and centered at this point in my life," Shari reflects, "reinforcing my deep desire to help humanity cope in this exciting, *got-to-get-spiritual-and-healthy* time."

The Light Emporium's Facebook page maintains an active presence, featuring pop-up shop vendor events, spiritual classes, and meditation circles. **Psychic Fairs** are held on the **last Saturday of every month**, offering the community a chance to connect, explore, and grow together. Offering **unique and inspired gifts** you won't find anywhere else in town, **The Light Emporium** is the perfect place to shop for the holidays, birthdays, or simply just because you care. Visit us with New and Expanded hours, **Open Wednesday 12-5pm Thursday through Saturday from 12-7 PM**, now through the end of the year.

Three Sisters Cafe sets up shop

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ASHTABULA — Three Sisters Cafe is a new addition to the Harbor, and has been busy serving customers and integrating into the local business scene.

The business, located at 1024 Bridge St., is owned by Liz Brower.

Brower said there are many reasons for the cafe's name, including sharing with a little restaurant she had previously been to in Italy, and for the historic name of corns, beans and squash when they were grown together.

"The other [reason] is my sister is also here with me running the restaurant, and her wife is my sister-in-law, so that's the third sister," Brower said.

Brower's sister is Sarah Brower and her sister-in-law is T Gallo, co-owner of

Harbor Gardens.

Liz Brower said her sister was vital to getting the restaurant started.

"She's like the muscles and the brains behind everything in this kitchen," she said.

Cooking and food were central for Liz Brower and her sister growing up, she said.

"It's what brought the family together," she said.

The restaurant had a soft opening during Harvest at the Harbor Sept. 21, she said.

"I think we had maybe 70-some orders that day," Brower said.

It officially opened Oct. 3, she said.

"It was roughly the same amount [of people] as the soft opening, I'd say," Brower said.

The restaurant's hours are 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday through Monday.

Brower said she hopes

to expand the restaurant's hours on the weekends down the line.

"We are producing a mainly vegan menu, mainly gluten free," she said. "All of our items are made with some sort [of] local, seasonal or organic food."

Brower said she used to run a restaurant more than a decade ago in New York.

"I knew I always wanted to have a restaurant again," she said. "It was just a dream I wanted to fulfill again someday. This was it."

There have been challenges with the restaurant's start, including rising food costs across the board, Brower said.

"I think anybody opening a brand new restaurant jumps through hoops with permitting," she said. "We completely equipped and furnished this place from zero to 100."

See **SISTERS** on 13



Liz Brower owns the newly opened Three Sisters Cafe on 1024 Bridge St.

Christopher Gillett | Star Beacon

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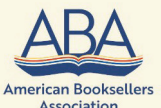
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GINNY PASHA
BUSINESS COORDINATOR FOR ASHTABULA COUNTY

Ginny Pasha has been named YBI Program Ambassador for Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties. Pasha joined YBI in July 2022 and, for the past three years, has worked with small businesses in Ashtabula County, providing training and access to funding. In her expanded role, she will continue to ensure that companies of all sizes are aware of the programs, services, and funding opportunities available through YBI.

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GINNY PASHA, ASHTABULA COUNTY PROGRAM MANAGER: GPASHA@YBI.ORG

Beauty care part and parcel of Main Street

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ASHTABULA — Hairapist Hair Salon has been a staple on 4610 Main Ave. for six years offering hair care and related services.

The venue offers many other beauty care options for customers, in addition to cosmetology and haircare.

Owner Suzy Kist has witnessed Main Avenue evolve her life in the Ashtabula area.

"I've seen it at the best of the best, at its worst, and I feel like I'm taking part in helping it grow again by putting color back on Main Avenue," she said.

Kist is one of the many business owners taking part in the Main Avenue facade improvement project.

"I am anxiously awaiting for it to happen," she said.

The Hairapist's name comes from Kist's work often involving giving personal advice to her clients, like a therapist, she said.

"When I started this business in 2019, the entire building was at 0% occupancy, but it's now at 90% occupancy," she said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine, Kist took the time to do renovations.

"When we did open back up, Pennsylvania had not opened back up, so a lot of people were coming over to get their hair cut," she said. "So, that helped my business also."

Social media has played a major role in Kist's success, she said.

"I'm on pretty much on all of the social media apps," she said.

A big challenge is finding honest, ethical contractors, Kist said.

"They're so stinking busy that there's just not choices," she said.

Kist had advice for other women interested in starting their own business.

"You will give up a bunch of your life, but I would never work for somebody ever

again," she said. "I like my freedom too much."

Kist also owns Kist by the Sun Tanning Salon & Wellness Center, located next door.

Tarica Ford manages the salon.

"Starting in about July until about November is our slower months usually, because everybody already has their tan, and then it's colder weather, so they don't think they need their tan," she said.

Clients have come from as far as Europe, Ford said.

"We have gotten better with the lotions, and learning about the tanning industry," she said. "We do trainings at least once a year."

Ford has seen the business expand a lot, she said.

"You've just got to keep chugging away and find the right people to believe in you, and when you do, you can do phenomenal things," she said.

Other related businesses also operate out of Kist's properties.

Jessie-Rose Pierce is an independent contracting nail technician through her business, The Nail-aholic.

"I specialize in art. I really like the art part of it," she said. "I also specialize in gel services. I do pedicures."

Pierce said she went to A-Tech to learn her skills.

"I've always had a passion for miniature art," she said. "That's how I got here."

Learning how to do nails professionally helped Pierce rebuild her life, she said.

"You have to be a lot more artistically inclined than I think people realize," she said. "A lot of people think you can just copy and paste stuff."

Pierce said she has a form of colorblindness that allows her to distinguish more of the color spectrum.

"I'm actually really good at color matching," she said. "If somebody pulls up their custom, and they want me to match the rim inseam, I'm going to walk out there and look at it, and I'm going to mix that color on my desk."



Photos by Christopher Gillett | Star Beacon

Suzy Kist owns Hairapist Hair Salon, a beauty salon that operates at 4610 Main Ave.

Tarica Ford, manager of Kist by the Sun Tanning Salon & Wellness Center, stands beside a tanning bed Oct. 23.

A lot of Pierce's work is counseling her clients about their everyday problems, she said.

"It takes a lot more than just coming and showing up everyday," Pierce said. "I'm here when people go through divorce, when they lose their babies, when they get married. I'm here for the good parts and the bad parts."

Pierce said a lot of women are hesitant to start their own business.

"More women should be a little bit more fearless," she said. "You might fall right on your face, but you might fly, too."

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GENEVA

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to be willing and able to learn these things, but also think outside of the box to get a multitude of things done, from gaining awareness and advertising but most importantly, making sure people are happy and feel welcome."

Haylee Eibl, owner of The Crystal Cottage, at 19 West Main St., said her experience in developing a business has been excellent, with support coming from friends, family, and customers.

"They've encouraged me from the very beginning — helping spread the word, offering a hand when I need it, and cheering me on through conversation," she said. "I've been met with nothing but positivity."

She said she worked for many years in a horse boarding facility owned and run by women.

"Seeing how my boss was sometimes treated differently really stuck with me and helped prepare me for opening my own business," Eibl said. "From the building search to financing and even stocking my shelves, I knew there would be moments when I'd be challenged."

The overall community support has been very helpful, she said.

"It's been really meaningful to have people believe in my vision and remind me that I'm capable of making it happen," Eibl said. "On a larger scale, it's also been comforting to see that there are social groups and financial resources out there to help women-owned businesses grow."

The support of other women business owners has been very helpful, she said.

"The group of women business owners in downtown Geneva is amazing," Eibl said. "I've never seen such a

genuinely supportive group that wants to see each other succeed rather than compete. Even though my shop has only been open a few months, they've gone out of their way to include me in events, share my posts, and stop in to check how I'm doing, and that really means a lot."

She said one of the reasons she chose downtown Geneva was because of the small-town, connected feel.

"Overall, being a woman running her own business has been such a positive experience," Eibl said. "I love that I'm showing my daughter it can be intimidating to make a big change, but with preparation, hard work, and the willingness to ask for help, things can really fall into place."

She said her daughter is seeing her mother show up every day, make decisions, connect with customers and build something.

Eibl spoke on the balance

between being kind and strong.

"Finding that balance between compassion and confidence keeps you grounded and moving forward," she said. "I do think it's become more 'normal' to see women running their own business, but there are still challenges we face, and that balance really helps to navigate them."

Nan, owner of Geneva Antiques of Ohio, has enjoyed the support she has received as a business owner.

"Downtown Geneva, its residents, officials, business owners and visitors have been a joy to work with and get to know," she said. "A great business community with a group and family mind sent where sent and support are embraced together."

"I have been active in business for 31 years now, learning and experiencing the industry through many economic highs and lows. In all it is the people I get to with, and alongside of, that drives my passion."

"Our shop is a group effort of many lady entrepreneurs, including a couple gentlemen, many of which have been in business longer than myself," Nan said. "We co-op together and celebrate the embrace of downtown Geneva's team of representatives, business owners and visitors. We are all very honored to be a part of the Geneva family and its all-inclusive insight."

"Being new to the area, I am blown away with the great community of support, men and women, of downtown Geneva," she said.

Business owners welcomed her with open arms and work to promote things together.

"All my years in business, the 'doing this together' mindset is an encouraging and refreshing embrace," Nan said. "Much appreciation for this selfless and open arms community of family friends to work alongside of each day."

Amber Massey, owner of



Warren Dillaway | Star Beacon

Amber Massey, owner of Miney Mo Vintage and Boutique, is one of many women business owners in downtown Geneva.

Miney Mo Vintage and Boutique, opened her business within the last year and has been very happy with the support she has received.

"Many people have stopped in and shown their support," she said. "Many women have made it a point to stop in and tell us that they are so happy and proud to have us in the community. It's been really amazing to see the impact we've had on people who are so happy to have a location in the community to pick up every-day clothing and gift items."

"The Geneva Business Women association has been really great. They reached out right when we opened and provided an opportunity to come speak to them as a group," she said.

Massey said throughout her career in a variety of jobs she has found women looking to work together and collaborate.

"To speak specifically to the downtown area, so many of the businesses are owned, co-owned, or run by women," Massey said. "We all communicate, work together, and

support each other very well. It's a really nice little community we've built and we are looking forward to more growth downtown."

Lake Erie Book Company Owner Quinn Maker said much of her support has come from family and friends.

"It's just not possible [for me at least] to own and operate your own business and be a mother without a supportive village," she said. "We are definitely always looking to collaborate and find more creative ways to generate traffic and interest in downtown Geneva."

"The last few years have seen at least five women-owned businesses open in significant downtown storefronts."

Maker said "one foot in front of the other" is the most important mindset for a woman owning a business.

"Small manageable steps have been key to tackling this endeavor! Dedicating yourself to your niche and looking past rough moments along the journey," she said. "Keep looking for the positive and the unexpected opportunity."

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SISTERS

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When planning the new restaurant, Brower said she designed much of the decorations and painted the walls with various Ohio native and farm plants.

She said her sister did the tiling and trim work.

"We did all of this by hand," Liz Brower said.

They are going to sell comfort foods like soup and grilled sandwiches as the weather turns colder, she said.

"We're hoping to make a transition to the winter, which we anticipate to be pretty slow around here," she said.

The Harbor seems like an up and coming part of Ashtabula County with unique businesses, Brower said.

"It's just beautiful here," she said.

Brower said her advice to other aspiring business owners is to do their research, seek mentorship and know anything can be done.

"Just don't be afraid to try something, make mistakes, learn and try again," she said.



Three Sisters Cafe owner Liz Brower, right, stands with restaurant team members Joshua Dean, left, and Sarah Brower.

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Founded by Clorice Dlugos (Vines), who earned her real estate license in 2003 and her broker's license in 2025, the group has grown into one of the region's top-performing teams. Now serving as Associate Broker for McDowell Real Estate, Dlugos leads a powerhouse team that consistently closes top sales volume annually, a benchmark few reach.

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The Clorice Dlugos Group provides full-service real estate across six counties in Northeast Ohio—including Ashtabula, Lake, Geauga, Cuyahoga, Trumbull, and Mahoning—as well as the greater Erie area of Pennsylvania. Whether it's commercial sales, luxury estates, investment properties, or residential single family and multi family homes, the group prides itself on being equipped to handle nearly every spectrum of real estate need. They are accustomed to problem solving and finding solutions in difficult situations as well.

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What sets this team apart isn't just their numbers—it's their approach. Dlugos emphasizes a culture of acceptance and safety, not only within her own team but in how they collaborate with other agents and brokerages. "Real estate should never be cutthroat," Dlugos says. "It's about upholding a higher ethical standard and making the process smooth and fair for everyone involved."



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Over the years, the Clorice Dlugos Group has been recognized with numerous industry honors and awards. Still, Dlugos insists that what drives her and her team is much simpler: "At the end of the day, it's not about the trophies. It's about making sure our sellers experience a smooth transaction and our buyers walk into a home they've fallen in love with."

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Photos by Christopher Gillett | Star Beacon

Jessie-Rose Pierce does independently contracted nail salon work out of the Hairapist Hair Salon through her business, the Nail-aholic.

BEAUTY

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Jenna Beaver runs Madam Barber, which offers haircuts.

"It actually started technically back in barber college," she said. "That's how I gained the nickname."

From there, Beaver said she choose the nickname for her business.

"COVID was hard, because I graduated barber college mid-COVID," she said. "I struggled very hard to find a place in the barber world, in the business world."

The hardship continued as businesses reopened and were focused on regaining lost revenue instead of expanding, Beaver said.

"When I was able and ready, barbering came back into my life," she said.

Other challenges have persisted for Beaver, she said, like being a single parent and working another job.

"I keep pictures of my kids at my station for that purpose," she said. "When people come to me as a business, I like to remind them it's shop small, support big, and they know they're not only supporting me."

Beaver said she wants to provide for her children.

There is a lot of money that goes into her work, Beaver said.

"I, for one, offer hot towel, straight razor shaves," she said. "There aren't that many barbers left, let alone in this county, that provide that service."

In addition to her business, Beaver offered free haircuts at the Remote Area Medical clinic last March in Saybrook.

"I actually will be back again this RAM clinic," she said. "I'll be doing haircuts again as well."

Jenna Beaver, owner of Madam Barber, provided free haircuts at the Remote Area Medical Clinic at Lakeside Junior High School in March.



Kori Marcy Campbell continues family legacy

SPONSORED CONTENT

CONNEAUT—Kori Marcy Campbell takes great pride in carrying on the legacy that her great, great grandfather, Willard Marcy, started in 1868. Women at the helm of a funeral business is no longer the eyebrow-raiser it once was, said Kori Marcy Campbell, of Marcy Funeral Home in Conneaut.

Campbell, who worked alongside her father, Robert, starting in 2001, said people have embraced the growing presence of wom-

en in what once was a male-dominated profession. "In fact, the number of women funeral directors increases each year," Campbell, a Conneaut native, had helped her father during calling hours, but didn't decide to devote herself to the business until she was a student in high school. "It wasn't until I was a junior or senior that I decided what I wanted to do," she said.

Marcy Funeral Home, may very well be Conneaut's oldest business. Campbell said she wanted to play an active role in the long-lived and respected business.

"As a fifth generation funeral director, I have quite a sense of pride in the level of care we offer to families," she said. Her brother, Kevin, is a funeral director in Acworth, Georgia. Further carrying on the family legacy.

Over the years, Marcy Funeral Home has expanded its services, including the opening of its Family Center opposite the funeral home on Harbor Street. The facility offers a place for family and friends to gather and is also popular with clubs, Campbell said.

The funeral business offers plenty of oppor-

tunity to do good in the community. I'm very involved in organizations and events throughout Ashtabula County. I think this helps people feel comfortable when they see a familiar face in their time of need," Campbell said. "It's fulfilling to be able to assist families in that time of their life," she said. "We can educate them on the options, including cremation, which is more popular, as it's become more accepted."



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