

Business of the Month

The other day I got a chance to sit and chat with Carla Skow, the owner of Inspira. This is a little bit of what I learned about Carla and her career in this business.

Her passion for hair started when she was a little girl growing up in her aunt's salon. She actually went to college to be a counselor in the beginning but wanted to try hair and she knew then she was meant to be a hairstylist. She attended Iowa School of Beauty and at that time they didn't have any internship programs so she had to take hours away from work to intern. Carla did two weeks at a salon in east village in Des Moines and two weeks in Ames. In August of 1999, she married Joel Skow and moved back home to Wesley, Iowa. She started work at Innovations in Whittemore for three years then moved her career to Spa Dee Da in Bancroft. There, she became manager and also started an education and coaching program. The programs made her slow down a little from behind the chair so she could educate the stylists from around the area. When she was a manager they took business courses in San Diego which lead the spa to getting a great life-coach whom they worked with weekly and was of great benefit. She loved that she was learning more and decided then to take business courses through Iowa State University. From that point she knew it was time to start Inspira.

Inspira was established in February of 2006. She decided on Wesley, Iowa to start her business so she could be close to home. Having her own hours also played a big part in the decision as well as having two children, Kylie and Carson Skow, which she was able to be with more often. She was so happy to have the support of her town and the customers that followed her. Inspira now has two full time independent consultants working. Kaitlyn has been with Inspira for three and a half years as a stylist and Morgan is a nail technician and has been there just for about a month. She would like to add a spray tan booth with one or two more people and possibly more on the retail side of business. "To be honest I would rather not add more than that because I feel that when you get a good family of people working with you, you got to have that trust value and I feel that less is best. The two girls that are working there are independent contractors but we all come together as Inspira." says Carla. Carla's concerns are more for the client than herself. "I look at what we do as an opportunity to be in that person's life and build the best version of themselves. We are building relationships with our clients and that's the main thing I tell all the girls that work with me 'This is like building a family, your crew, your people, they hold you tight and hope that they can come in and sit in your chair and be able to trust you in what you do.'" says Carla. She focuses on facial shapes to give the client that fabulous look. She is able to look at someone and modify the cut you want to your facial shape. Carla had a great opportunity to work for Sam Brocato from Brocato products as an educator. She said it was intense work and intense studying. He only selected ten of seventy-five people in that class and Carla being one of them. Carla was honored to be selected. She only worked for the Hair Care Company for a few years, having to balance travel time, younger children and still working full time she knew it was a great experience and opportunity. Carla's advise to someone starting out in this industry would be, "Don't burn yourself out or you will loose your passion. Do your time and work hard, be accessible for your customers and never stop educating yourself."

Two years ago Carla had an injury to her neck, four vertebrae were bulged and a nerve that was tightly pinched. Her doctor said she was very lucky she was not paralyzed on the left side of her body. So for the next year of her life she had to be careful. Carla's career at that time had to come to a screeching halt at the risk of being paralyzed moving the wrong way. The doctors were unable to do surgery on it because of the pinched nerve and the healing process would take years. Even still to this day she can't work full time, but living in a small town she said she is so blessed because she had support of the community. Carla is a full time business owner and also working part time as a stylist at Inspira when her injury allows her. She also does part time at her friend's magazine *Woman's Inc. Magazine* in Ad Sales.

The salon sells Youngblood Mineral Make-up natural make-up great for hypo-allergenic skin. It can even cover a black tattoo. They keep up with the latest and greatest products and fashion. Inspira also sells jewelry & soon 'Junk Headbands'. Inspira sells 'Total Tea' (detox tea) and 'Chiroflex' (turmeric) all natural that Carla speaks very highly of. She started taking this as a treatment for her neck and back three months ago. She has been able to add in an extra hair cut into her day and do things she was never able to. Carla knew she had to get the word out and start selling this product. Going through what she went through she can't say enough about it and even her other stylist having lower back problems felt a difference.

Carla is always willing to help the community as much as she can. She donates a lot of gift packages and product bags to those in need. She also donates to the Can Drive, American Red Cross and CARE Team. Carla and her husband enjoy helping with community events around town.

Carla and the girls at Inspira wish to say "Thank-You to our customers and community for your support through the last years. We want you to be the best version of yourself when you come to Inspira."

Written by: Stephanie Ricke