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Jennifer Reynolds opened her own salon nine years ago. Hair by JR has been in its current second-floor location in downtown

has been in its current second-floor location in downtown Naperville since 2015. (Steve Metsch / Naperville Sun)

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Phone/website: 630-667-5133,
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Owner: Jennifer Reynolds, 39, of
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Years in business? Nine

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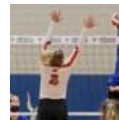
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What does your businesses do? “I’m a hair stylist. But I only cut hair. I don’t color. ... Men and women come here. Children,” Reynolds said.

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How did you get into this business? “I always loved doing hair. I’d do friends’ hair for dances in high school. I have three sisters. I’d always do their hair. I kind of knew from a young age that this is what I wanted to do.”

Why? “I like showing people what they can do with their hair. People say, ‘I have terrible hair.’ (I say) ‘Let me show you how we can make it look thicker.’ I love a challenge. And I love getting creative. That’s the fun part of this job.”

Was there a certain moment? “My neighbor was a hair stylist. I said ‘I want to cut my older sister’s hair.’ She was in high school. (The neighbor) told me what to do and I did it. Of course, it was probably terrible, but I thought it looked pretty good and she liked it. From there, I was hooked.”

What was it like starting your own salon? “When you go off on your own, it’s nerve wracking (after) you’ve been at a salon so long. ... I had just had my second child and I needed more flexibility. I have three children now.”

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How bad was the breakup with your old salon? “It wasn’t taken very well. That was nine years ago and it was kind of the start of people renting chairs. Now, it’s such a big thing. ... It was tough. I was under a contract. I

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had to be five miles away. That's something you don't think about when you sign that contract."



Jennifer Reynolds opened her own salon nine years ago. Hair by JR has been in its current second-floor location in downtown Naperville since 2015. (Steve Metsch / Naperville Sun)

How many stylists work here? "We all work for ourselves here. It's a chair rental (salon). There are nine of us."

How did the virus impact your business? "We finally feel like we're getting back to normal."

People started coming back in August and September, then there was the shutdown in October and November. I feel like the past two months we're finally starting to see our books full again. It's a tough year."

Did you cut hair in clients' homes? "No. We had to be careful about losing our license."

Did you see long hair when clients returned? "Yeah. The men were fun, watching them come in with ponytails."

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What's the difference between men and women? "Men are more particular. Sometimes, you'll get the call from the wife, 'OK, this is what you need to do.' It's kind of funny. ... Men are kind of set in their ways. ... Women always want to do something different, which is great. ... They're definitely more open-minded."

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How do you decide how to style

someone's hair? "First, you have to ask what they don't want. You can get rid of a lot with that. ... People always have a haircut they hated, so you've got to make sure you get that figured out first. And, 'How much change do you want? Are you attached to your length?' There's a lot of questions that go with it. ... I usually err on the side of caution. 'Let's start here. We can always cut more off.' ... I've actually sent client pictures, 'I just saw this. She reminds me of you. What do you think?' ...

You can tell by somebody's personality if they'd like it more funky or more conservative."

What do you like best about doing business in Naperville?

"I love this location. There's always something going on. I love the energy. It's so clean down here. All the stores are nice. It's such a great downtown. Now I'm spoiled. I can't go anywhere else."

Is there a busy time of year?

"Now is slower because (July) is a big vacation month. August will start to get busy again. I don't feel like we have the holiday rush like we used to. It's kind of steady. For some reason, April is busy."

Any negatives? "Working Saturdays all the time. ... I find that I don't say 'no.'"

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What misconceptions do people have?

"People think it's what you do because you're not smart enough to go to college. That is terrible. And I think people think we don't

...and, I think people think we don't
make a good living.”

Do you get extra training? “Every two
years, we have to do 14 hours of continuing
ed.”

Any plans? “I love getting new clients. I plan
on staying here. I’ve got a good thing here.”

**What’s your advice for someone
starting a business?** “Reach out to people
who have small businesses for advice. You
definitely need a website. ... Get an
accountant.”

*Steve Metsch is a freelance reporter for the
Naperville Sun.*

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