

Stefanecs boast 12 barbers in the family; one just opened a shop in N.R.

By Carol Klear

When brothers Joe and Steve Stefanec opened their barbershop in Cleveland nearly 40 years ago, they set an example for the rest of the family; everybody should have a trade. And

their philosophy paid off...big time. Presently there are 12 members of the Stefanec family who are barbers, including Lori, who celebrated the grand opening of Lori Stefanec's Barber Shop, at 33133 Center Ridge Road, in Mills Creek Plaza, Dec. 3.

Parents want their children to go to college, but "My father said, 'Have a trade,'" Lori said, adding that it's something to fall back on.

"Every one of my cousins are barbers and every one of us love it."

No stranger to the business, Lori has been a barber for 15 years and before opening her own shop, she worked for her brother in North Royalton for 10 years.

"I live in North Ridgeville, so now it's just seven minutes to work," she said.

As she mulled the idea of opening her own barbershop, Lori said she began looking around for a good location and is sure she's found it.

"It's close to home," she said.



Two-year-old Cole Corcoran sits very still while Lori Stefanec cuts his hair.

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adding that there is only one other shop in town and that's located farther west.

Lori and her cousin, Sherri, who was helping her out one day last week, enjoy making people happy about their appearance.

"It's a job, but it's not a job," Sherri said.

Preparing for their trade, the family barbers all went to the barber school located at W. 25th and Lorain Road, Lori said.

"It (the course) was 1,800 hours—eight hours a day," she said. "Then you have to go to Columbus to take a state board (exam). You have to be licensed."

But once you're licensed, that's it, Lori said, adding that it's not like a beautician who has to keep up with styles and colorings.

"You have to renew your license every two years," Sherri added.

Lori said her shop caters to men, women and children, however, "We don't do hair coloring."

"We give beard trims, shaves, clay pack facials and old-fashioned steam facials," she said. And she offers reasonable rates, confident that her clients will return often. The shop is large, with lots of room to move around and if she finds herself overwhelmed with customers, she can always send an SOS to another member of the Stefanec family.

"I've got a good family, we help each other out," Lori said. "We're Hungarian."

"Our family is old-school," Sherri said. "My Uncle Joe was 17-years-old when he started barbering."

As a seasoned barber, Lori said she could give a haircut in 10 minutes. And while a customer is in her chair,

they talk about everything—the weather or the big game on Sunday.

"I enjoy it," Lori said. "There's such an abundance of subjects, like what's going on in the country. There could be a guy sitting in my chair that's complaining about the world and the next guy could be a joker."

"When you're a barber, you're a therapist, a worker, a friend," she said.

"But there are two things you don't discuss...politics and religion," Sherri added with a smile.

How do the women handle tough customers?

"There is no such thing as a tough customer," Sherri said, noting that in her years of barbering she has had a couple of men yell at her and sometimes you have screaming kids. But the barber business is bit different than some others, because people come in to make themselves look better, Lori said.

"Why would you start a fight with someone with clippers or a razor in their hand?" Sherri asked, with a wry smile.

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Barbershops have almost no boundaries when it comes to age.

"Nine months was the youngest kid I've had," Lori said. "He had jet black hair and it looked like he had a toupee on and he just sat there looking around."

At 6 months old, Sherri's son was her youngest customer, she said. But in her brother's shop a man 102 years old stopped in to get a haircut.

"And his 85-year-old daughter brought him," she added.

Lori said that in the barber business you build a friendship with the clients, and being open less than a month, she's waiting for people to learn that she is there.

"It's something new," she said, adding philosophically, "The water trickles before the river flows."

No appointment is necessary and the hours at Lori Stefanec's Barber Shop are: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and closed on Sunday. The prices range from \$8-\$15 with an average charge \$10.