

# Lowell cosmetologist digs deep to help clients with hair, scalp issues



Sharon Clohesy of Tyngsboro, owner of Hair and Scalp 360, examines hair and scalp of client Ann DiPalma of Chelmsford. (SUN/Julia Malakie)

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LOWELL — Sharon Clohesy examines the condition of Ann DiPalma's scalp and hair follicles, using a microscopic camera that projects a magnified image onto a monitor.

"When we do an analysis by a dermoscope, it's important to look at the overall scalp to make sure that the hair follicles are active, to make sure there's no excessive scaling or oil plugging that could be impacting the hair growth cycle, as well as the environment of the scalp," Clohesy said.

DiPalma's scalp is healthy now, but the Chelmsford resident had experienced persistent itchiness before seeking Clohesy's help at Hair and Scalp 360 a couple years ago.

Clohesy, of Tyngsboro, opened her Hair Salon 2000 almost 20 years ago. Now at 225 Steadman St., the studio is home to both the salon and Hair and Scalp 360, opened in 2016.

DiPalma has been a client of Clohesy at Hair Salon 2000 for about 15 years, and has always been impressed with Clohesy's knowledge of hair. So when DiPalma found herself constantly scratching her scalp to the point of bleeding, she immediately thought Clohesy might be able to provide some answers and solutions.

Throughout her years as a cosmetologist, Clohesy said she found again and again clients were having problems with scalp conditions that dermatologists and other doctors couldn't seem to help them resolve.



Sharon Clohesy of Tyngsboro, owner of Hair and Scalp 360, examines hair and scalp of client Ann DiPalma of Chelmsford. (SUN/Julia Malakie)

In her research, Clohesy discovered trichology, the study of the hair and scalp and related conditions. Finding a way to combine the art and science of hair, she was hooked.

Clohesy became a certified trichologist through the International Association of Trichologists, completing a course of education online and clinical training in San Antonio, Texas. She will also speak at IAT's 2020 World Conference in Iceland this August.

"I wanted to grow the knowledge of trichology in the area, and I wanted to be able to do consulting with clients to be able to allow them the opportunity to know that there's other choices out there that they can make," Clohesy said. "There are answers to the conditions or things that they're experiencing."

With Hair and Scalp 360, she works one-on-one with clients to solve their individual scalp problems, assessing both internal and external factors, from hair care regimen

to diet. She helps them understand what their hair and scalp needs really are, what products are suitable for their hair texture and type and how to properly use those products.



Magnified scalp on screen as Sharon Clohesy of Tyngsboro, owner of Hair and Scalp 360, examines hair and scalp of client Ann DiPalma of Chelmsford. (SUN/Julia Malakie)

Having a longtime interest in preservatives and skin sensitizing agents in hair products that can cause irritation, Clohesy suspected DiPalma's problem had to do with the ingredients in the products she was using.

She recommended various products to DiPalma to try out, but none produced the results they were looking for. At the same time, Clohesy had begun working on creating her own products, and gave DiPalma samples to try.

In less than a week, DiPalma's itching had stopped — and it hasn't come back since she's been using Clohesy's product.

"Not only did the itching and the scaling go away, my hair felt cleaner. It felt more manageable," DiPalma said. "I didn't even have to use as much hair spray and other volumizing products. It's just wonderful. I love it."

Clohesy worked with a Texas lab specializing in cosmetic development to produce her line of hair care products that just became available for retail sale Dec. 16.



Some items from the ROgHa Hair System developed by Sharon Clohesy from Hair and Scalp 360 in Lowell. The products are manufactured in Texas and are designed to be the appropriate pH balance and free of known carcinogens, allergens and irritants. (Sun / Alana Melanson)

Her ROgHA Hair System includes a daily shampoo and conditioner and weekly clarifying shampoo that are free of potential carcinogens, allergens and other irritants that can be found in many body products. All of the ROgHA products have a pH balance of 4.5 to 5.5 — a slight acidity that is ideal for the hair and scalp — and do not contain sulfates, parabens, ethanolamines (ammonia compounds DEA, MEA, TEA), triclosan, synthetic fragrances or colors, silicones, formaldehyde-releasing compounds, preservatives like phenoxyethanol, methylisothiazolinone and methylchloroisothiazolinone, and other known irritants and allergens.

ROgHA, she explained, is the Irish word for “choice,” and she kept the “g” lowercase in the name because it’s silent.

Despite her dedication to it today, Clohesy never intended to become a cosmetologist, or to open her own salon, or to design her own line of products.

In the middle of her sophomore year at Greater Lowell Tech, she decided the vocation she had chosen, childcare, wasn’t right for her. Wanting to be able to graduate as a full senior, she found cosmetology was the only shop that would allow her to complete the whole program in two years.

Clohesy didn’t even like to do her own hair, so she didn’t welcome the idea of working on other people’s hair.

She entered the program with the attitude that she just needed to do the work required to finish school, and told the instructor she didn’t need much attention because she didn’t really want to be there. That quickly changed, however, and Clohesy ended up taking home silver and gold medals in school and district competitions, and even scored the best in the state one year.

After graduation, her parents pushed her to get licensed, even though she didn't want to continue in the field. While working other jobs, she continued to work in a salon, and found there were many changes she wanted to make, such as with the products used, that she didn't have the power to make.

Again, her parents encouraged her to see it through, and Clohesy did more training to earn her instructor's license. In April 2000 she opened her salon, and began teaching full time.

"I was always hungry for knowledge, and I haven't looked back since," Clohesy said.

She said she found her profession was much more than just cutting and coloring hair, and that she could really help people and impact their lives. That has only grown with Hair and Scalp 360, and through a unique oncology program she's created.

Many people dear to Clohesy — including her mother, father and nephew — have suffered through cancer and the hair loss and other complications that can arise during treatment.

About a year ago, she launched her Hair and Scalp Wellness During Chemotherapy and Radiation program aimed at the needs of cancer patients. She holds regular sessions at Lahey Oncology & Hematology at Parkland Medical Center in Derry and Salem, N.H., and she hopes to expand to include cancer centers closer to home.

The free program covers what kind of hair and scalp changes the patients can expect during and after treatment, and how they can care for their scalps during hair loss or thinning and regrowth.

"I feel I can be another resource for them while they're going through a time of uncertainty," Clohesy said. "The doctors and nurses, they have other things to take care of, and I feel like if I can just help that patient, or give that direct contact, I have that knowledge and I want to help."

For more information about Hair and Scalp 360, visit [hairandscalp360.com](http://hairandscalp360.com) or call 978-856-5774.