



Rejuvenating LIFE

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Lina Haralambous gives clients "A Better Image"

by Nancy Thompson



Lina Haralambous treats clients at her office on Welles Street in Glastonbury.

Lina Haralambous has gone from building houses to building images.

Ms. Haralambous, a native of Greece, left home to attend the University of Connecticut, where she earned a degree in civil engineering. She had planned to return home and go into the family's construction business, but she met a Greek man in college, married, and moved to Glastonbury to work as an engineer 21 years ago.

Several years later, the construction industry was in trouble, work was scarce and she wanted to find a job that would give her more time to be with her children. She decided to become licensed in electrolysis, a profession in which she could come and go as needed.

Not only did it have that advantage, but it offered steadier work than engineering.

"All women have unwanted hair," she said. "They all try to keep it a secret."

She trained at the Electrology Institute of New England in Massachusetts, was licensed by the state Department of Public Health and bought the necessary equipment.

She opened her business in 1997 and moved to an office on Welles Street the following year. She has certifications in several areas including electrolysis, permanent cosmetics and the control of blood-borne pathogens.

She's also certified as an instructor in electrolysis and in the SofTap method of perma-

nent cosmetic application. About six years ago, Ms. Haralambous decided to expand her business to include permanent cosmetics.

"As we mature, we want to include more elements and the more creative you have to be in your career," she said. "I think we are all ready to add something new every 10 years or so."

She went to California to study at one of the top schools and returned with yet another certification.

"People are not aware of the kinds of things

you can do with permanent makeup," Ms. Haralambous said, adding that 95 percent of her permanent makeup business involves eyebrows, eyeliner and lips.

"Lashes gives the eyes definition and brows give the face definition," she said.

"A very small percentage take it to the next level."

In many cases, these clients have conditions that have left them without eyebrows or lashes, or with scars and other disfigurements. For these people, permanent makeup can change their lives.

Ms. Haralambous has created areolas for women who have undergone mastectomies and subsequent breast reconstruction. She has created colored toenails for women whose toenails were removed because of infection.

She has colored serious scars on African Americans, who generally grow highly noticeable white scar tissue. She has rendered almost invisible a large meningioma — a reddish-purple tumor — on a client's face.

Ms. Haralambous has two walls full of certificates, but it's her confident and comforting manner that puts clients at ease.

A client from Manchester, who asked that her name not be used, has had alopecia, an auto-immune disease in which people lose all body hair, for 21 years. Here's her story:

"I lost my eyebrows and eyelashes when I

was eight years old. When I was 18, I decided to have permanent makeup done and went to New York City twice for the procedure.

"A family friend who was a client of A Better Image then told me about Lina and since she was right in Glastonbury, it was definitely worth checking out. After a consultation, Lina did my brows and eye liner with permanent makeup in December 2006.

"I have since been back twice in the past three years for touch-ups to both my brows and eyes. Lina's work is excellent and very natural looking.

"From a distance it is difficult to tell that my brows and lashes are not real. After traveling to New York for the same procedure, I have found Lina to not only have done better work, but her location, compassion and patience have made it a better experience."

Unlike some technicians who apply "permanent makeup," Ms. Haralambous does not use a traditional tattoo machine or the ink typically found in tattoos. Instead, she uses a technique known as SofTap.

"I have a lot of control in color and location and in how the skin is manipulated," she said.

The ink is iron oxide based rather than carbon based, which means the color doesn't migrate from the site where it's applied. It fades over the course of three to 10 years and needs to be touched up at that point.

Ms. Haralambous often gets referrals from plastic surgeons, who don't do the kind of work she does, and from oncologists and dermatologists, whose patients can benefit from her services.

She's proud of her work and the many people she has helped by giving them a better image.

"I chose the name of my business very carefully."

In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Lina Haralambous is offering free consultations in October for breast cancer patients and survivors. Call 652-8878 to schedule an appointment. **GL**

A Better Image is in Suite 250, 36 Welles Street. The website is www.abetterimageonline.com.

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