

Jackie Grimley

Jumping feet first into reflexology

Jackie Grimley's career path began in hairdressing and followed a number of detours, including retail, production, catering and office work, but it was a fascination with feet – sparked by the excellent standard of care given to her son Jack for the condition talipes – which finally led Jackie to live out her dream as a reflexologist.

And it's a dream that's already creating great dividends for Jackie, as she's recently picked up a prestigious award for her work – which includes helping families of children with autism and dementia carers – and has just learned she's in the running for another honour at a glittering ceremony later this year.

The Killeeshil mum of five and grandmother of three picked up the Families First NI Healthcare Provider Award at a glamorous event in the Crowne Plaza Belfast last month, but Jackie says she's still "in complete shock" to have been nominated by her valued clients.

Helping others through the use of reflexology – a system of massage used to relieve tension and treat illness, based on the theory that there are reflex points on the feet, hands, and head linked to every part of the body – is the inspiration behind Jackie's business, Serenity Holistics Wellness CIC, which is based in The Cube at Dungannon Enterprise Centre.

Still employed full-time with Muldoon Transport in Clonmore, Jackie told the Herald how she first felt compelled to follow her dream. "When my son Jack was born he had a condition known as Talipes (or Club Foot), a birth defect that can affect one or both feet.

"It is a condition that required many hospital visits, along with three operations over a period of four years.

"This condition was completely new to me and I was amazed at the way in which, after all the years of work done by his consultant Catherine Duffy and her team, how the procedures succeeded in making Jack's feet perfect.

"This procedure fascinated me and gave me an interest in feet and how our body works, but it was not until many years later when I decided to take a look at courses in Dungannon Further Education College that I came across Reflexology, and again it stirred my interest in feet. After spending a year learning the basics on Reflexology I decided to take it further and contacted Josephine Gallagher at the School of New Beginnings; it was here that I worked for 18 months to obtain my Diploma in Reflexology and I have never looked back.

"Since then I have continued to work in my full-time job as an admin assistant with Muldoon Transport, which has enabled me to continue to learn and develop my business, Serenity Holistics Wellness CIC, to where it is now."

Despite her business and work commitments, family is central to Jackie's life, and she's keenly aware of the value

Award winning Jackie Grimley says her job as a therapist allows her to help people on their personal journeys in a judgement-free environment

of people over possessions, a quality she credits to her late mother, Mamie.

"I was the youngest of a family of six brought up in Brocagh and that has left me with very happy childhood memories," she explains.

"I am mother to Julie, Raymond, Anthony Jamie and Jack, and I am extremely proud of each of them who are all hard working and successful in their own career choice.

"I am also blessed to have three lovely grandchildren in my life, Aimee who is 13, Ella 10 and Sinead, who is seven. But by having a family grow up when twin-tubs and red phone boxes were popular has made me realise in later years that life is not always about what we have in it, but more about 'who we have in it' that counts.

"I am grateful to have had the support of my children and husband Jerome to help me get to where I am today, my sister Linda also plays her part in looking after me still and I really value her advice, help and support in my business,

"It was my late mother Mamie who played the biggest part in moulding me into the person I am today, she inspired me my whole life and I admired her hard work, commitment love and dedication to her family for all her life with us. Sadly she is no longer with us but I take on board what she taught me in life and I am blessed to have had her as my mother. Her love and support was immeasurable.

"Without the support and words of encouragement from all my family I would not be where I am today."

The lives of Jackie's clients are just as important, she says, because her job as a therapist allows her to listen to them and their concerns in a "safe environment with no judgement".

"The best part of being a therapist is the clients you meet and how they take you into their own journey in life; they feel a connection with you in a safe environment with no judgement.

"The clients can be themselves and open up to talk about areas of their life that may be affecting them, be that past trauma from childhood, low moods, work-life balance or just some time for themselves to relax, unwind and breathe.

"Seeing a client change and take back control of their life is one of the best feelings in the world. In today's society we all live a hectic life with work, family, health and financial stresses, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the seem-

ingly endless array of tasks, all of which can impact on our health and well-being.

"Making some lifestyle changes and taking some time out for ourselves helps with the feel-good factor, in turn giving a boost to our physical, mental, emotional and general well-being."

As well as providing therapies through the auspices of her business, and helping local charities through several Holistic Fairs in Dungannon earlier this year, Jackie also runs workshops for parents and carers who support children and adults with autism, learning difficulties, complex and vulnerable needs.

The workshops teach new skills to help reduce stress, anxiety and tension, and help improve mood, encourage social interaction and increase receptiveness.

Jackie also hosts training events for fellow therapists, with visiting teachers renowned in the field, including Angela Telford and Mauricio Kruchik, with Cancer Care Reflexologist Claire O'Grady already lined up for September.

Full details of the exciting visiting trainers can be obtained by contacting Jackie in her role as the Federation of Holistic Therapists' South Tyrone co-ordinator, which sees her organising regular networking events for members, non-members and students alike.

"Since the group started I have arranged monthly meetings where we have heard from speakers like Josephine Gallagher (Angel Sanctuary), Dr Aileen O'Kane (All illness begins in the gut) and Trudy Arthurs to name a few.

"These meetings have proved to be a popular and light-hearted way to connect, learn and share with local therapists.

"It has been rewarding for me, as it provides a platform for therapists to discuss any concerns they may have, and helps spread the word on what is happening in the world of holistic therapies.

"My aim for these meetings is to help take away that fear of loneliness as it is my belief that together we really are stronger and have a lot to offer.

"Anyone who may have something to offer this group with 100 plus members, should it be advice on social media, running a business, GDPR First aid training, or any other area of training please get in touch. We would love to hear from you. New members are always welcome and you can get in contact with me on the following number: Jackie Grimley MFHT, FRT, Family First Award (best healthcare provider 2018) 078 7964 4604."



Jackie Grimley.
Photo: Michael Cullen

The Big Interview



BY ANNAMAY
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Jackie with one of her clients Dom.



Jackie Grimley with her grandchildren Sinead, Aimee, and Ella Hughes. MC 7



Jackie helps to organise training workshops.