

'A great way to serve others'

Spa owner bills Pampered Healing Massage Therapy and Day Spa as a Christian-based business.

By Bridget B. Winston
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Christina O'Connor | The Roanoke Times
Carol Huntley-Weber.

Carol Huntley-Weber had been suffering from pain related to some medical problems. On top of that, she had recently been promoted to head of the marketing department at United Pet Group (formerly Tetra), so she was feeling the aches and pains of work-related stress.

A coworker recommended she visit massage therapist Korena Anderson.

That was 10 months ago, and Huntley-Weber said she has been pain-free ever since.

"She has certainly fixed all my aches and pains, and I had tried everything -- physical therapy and everything else," said Huntley-Weber, 51, of Blacksburg. "This has just been a miracle cure for me."

If part of the miracle is in Anderson's touch, at least part of it is in Anderson's prayers, as well. Anderson, owner of Pampered Healing Massage Therapy and Day Spa in Christiansburg, describes herself as a devoted Christian and bills her massage practice as "a Christian-based business."

"I love the whole Christian philosophy of treating others how you would want to be treated and not judging them, but caring for them where they are," Anderson said. "God calls us all to have servants' hearts, and massage is a

great way to serve others.

"I believe God uses my hands to help those who need the touch of renewal."

Anderson's office is decorated both with clinical posters of the human muscular system and with prayers, devotionals and Biblical passages. She quotes Mark 16:18 on her Web site and in her spa brochures: "They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover."

At the end of each massage session, Anderson lays her hands on her client and says a silent prayer for their well-being.

"I pray God will bless them with good health and peace," she said.

She believes her prayers are similar to the mantras and philosophies of massage therapists who use New Age techniques on their clients.

"A lot of them adopt Eastern religions or philosophies -- energy work or reiki. They're praying that way," she said. "Spiritually, this is who I am and what I believe."

Anderson does draw a line between her personal spiritual life and her professional life, however. She does not expect her clients to pray with her or even share her beliefs.

"I don't ever talk about it [with clients]," she said. "Everybody's different and I respect their differences. But it's who I am. It's not something I would bring up because it's very personal."

Pembroke resident Paula Sizemore, who has been getting massages for about a year to treat migraine headaches, appreciates the strong faith that Anderson brings to her business.

"It very much makes a difference," said Sizemore, 51. "I'm a Christian too, so I really appreciate it."

Sizemore, who is a pastor's wife, said she and Anderson have discussed matters of faith, but she said Anderson always follows the client's lead in conversation.

"A lot of times when I go, I just want to chill, but sometimes we do chat," she said.

For Huntley-Weber, Anderson's faith was a "non-issue." But she can see that a Christian perspective could be a positive aspect to a massage business.

Huntley-Weber and Sizemore both said they appreciate the time Anderson gives her clients before and after a massage, to talk about any massage preferences, health issues, pain or other concerns they have.

"She is very generous with her time," Sizemore said. "A lot of times, her heart is so much for you that she'll work overtime. She is such a blessing."

After working in day spas and medical settings, Anderson launched Pampered Healing in 2004, when she treated clients in her home. She opened her office on First Street in Christiansburg about a year ago. In addition to being a certified massage therapist, Anderson also is certified in spa treatments, including facials, body scrubs and wraps, hand and foot treatments, and makeup application.