

Papa Toodles Salon Is Success Story Before and After COVID-19 Pandemic

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
December 5 2023 3:25 PM



GODFREY - Papa Toodles Hair Salon in Godfrey marked its ninth anniversary of serving customers on Dec. 2, 2023.

The business officially opened on Dec. 2, 2014. Wade and James Gibson operate the salon and also have Angie Dennis and David Smith there as hair stylists. The hair business has changed greatly, and the cost of products to do the job in the industry has skyrocketed, the two owners said.

"It's impossible to make the wage to equal the cost," the pair said. "Women did get a weekly appointment 40 years ago to be styled. We see little of that. The COVID-19 pandemic set the industry back, causing some salons to close. We are striving not to let it happen to us. We still love visiting with our long-term people."

Many ask how the creative name "Papa Toodles" was formulated. The name comes from Wade and James' grandkids' name for Wade. James chose a career in the field because he had always enjoyed hair but never had the opportunity to pursue it when he was younger.

"I worked in food service for many years and finally one day decided if I was going to do this I needed to do it now," he said. "So I enrolled in cosmetology and began my career in Vandalia before meeting Wade and moving to the Alton area in 2014 and pursuing our dream."

Wade said being in the hair industry and owning a business has taught them a lot and "we continue to learn in an ever-changing business such as a hair salon. From the latest techniques to the newest trends, we continue to grow every day. When COVID hit we didn't know if we would make it, as some did not in this industry with the rising cost of products, rents, utilities and everyday costs. We are a few years past the pandemic and still see the effects, as things are different from supply chain issues to cost of supplies.

"But through all and all we are doing our best to keep the salon alive. We take pride in our salon and our work and enjoy doing what we do. We enjoy the customers who have become our family. Plus it's not every day you get to work with your best friend, business partner, or husband. Angie came to work with us about four years ago and David joined us a little over a year ago and has added so much to our team. We are a family-oriented salon and take pride in our work, pride, and business."

James and Wade said they are excited about the anniversary of nine years in business and are eager to see what the future holds.

"Wade and I have been together for nine years at this location on Homer Adams Parkway in Godfrey," James said.

For more information about Papa Toodles, contact (618) 433-1883.