



## Ocean County Vocational Technical School

### Sharing Success Stories

### Owning Your Own Business

**Student:** Carla Cifelli

**Name of Business:** Elevations Hair Studio, Brick, NJ

**# of years in business:** 8 ½

**Website:** [facebook.com/elevationshairstudio](https://www.facebook.com/elevationshairstudio)

**Class of:** 2004

**Instructor:** Deb Gall

**OCVTS Program:** Cosmetology

**Center:** Toms River

**In Carla's own words...** Education! So you've graduated, now what? Get a job in your trade and keep learning. When I graduated from the cosmetology program, I was thankful for the license, but then I wanted to be the best at my trade. I invested a lot of time and money furthering my education so that I could be proud of the quality of my work. I really enjoyed being a hairstylist and I already had a business background. So, after working for another successful salon owner, I decided to take the plunge and start my own business.

There is nothing easy about owning a small business, almost nine years ago when I opened Elevations, someone gave me words of wisdom and these words still ring true, "No one will ever care about your business as much as you do." She was so right.

Today, I would offer my advice to anyone thinking of opening their own salon. In the cosmetology industry, I believe being compassionate and sensitive is a huge part of building a clientele. They become friends and you want your friends to look and feel good about themselves. Listen, listen, listen; and if you do not understand what your clients' wants and needs are, ask questions or look at pictures together. The rest is obvious. Do work you are proud of. I always want my clients to walk out with great hair. I really enjoy my clients and hopefully, you will too.

Attending OCVTS was such a great choice for me. It was an affordable option and I felt like my classmates and I were well prepared for the state licensing exam. I attended three nights a week and finished in two years. My teacher, Mrs. Gall was an inspiration to me because she was a practicing hairdresser, a salon owner, and a teacher.



Looking at the picture of Carla, (seated on the left) and the staff at her salon, Elevations in Brick, generated a big smile on Deb's face. "I had Carla as a student in my first year of teaching cosmetology at OCVTS. Carla was the most professional and kindest student ever! I admired Carla for going to vocational school seeking a career change, all while being married and raising a family. She also earned awesome grades in the program. I remember Carla because she was an inspiration not only to me but to the other students in my class."