

BERNADETTE LAVOIE



NORTH COUNTRY MASSAGE & MEDI SPA
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Bernadette Lavoie knows where there is a will, there is a way. The professional and successful owner of North Country Massage and Medi-Spa, mother and community supporter, says it has definitely been a challenge finding the balance between work and family.

Highly adventurous and well-travelled, Bernadette married, and lived in Italy with her first child, before moving back to Canada when her daughter was 3 years old. "That's when I started my first business," she says. As a new single and sole-support parent, she says, the difficulty was having time. "When starting a business, you have to put in the time. I'd sometimes wait hours to see a new patient, but you had to. It's the only way the client can recommend you to others." But then she fondly remembers stories of times her daughter came after school to her company, and napped in the laundry room. "We reminisce about those days sometimes," she recalls, "it was us against the world."

Her company, North Country Massage and Medi-Spa, is quite unique. They provide services in all kinds of things and are the leading provider for Coolsculpting, Injectables, laser, skin, and spa treatments in the Prince Albert, Saskatchewan area since 2010. It's important to her that her clients leave both healthy and happy. That's why she takes it seriously,

putting the medical into "Medi-spa". "We have two great nurses and a doctor that are employed here. As well, 99 per cent of our employees are Metis or Indigenous single mothers." She is determined to give back to her community however she can.

"I had so much help along the way," she states. "The most important person, throughout it all, has become a sister to me. Maxine Redekopp works for the Clarence Campeau Development Fund and has done so much more for me than I could have ever expected. You need people around you who support and encourage you. There is enough negativity out there."

She tells a story of a bank manager years ago, who remarked that she was a huge liability in terms of lending, and that they were surprised she could even eat on her income. She assured him that she and her daughter would be just fine - and they are.

A later relationship brought a second daughter, and the family continues to prosper. Her elder daughter has even decided to become a nurse, potentially following in her mother's footsteps in the healthcare industry, and there is a proud and hopeful note in when Bernadette tells that story.

Bernadette, and her family, have since moved to the family farm. She mentions that as she is talking, she is putting the eaves troughs back on the family home. "Who knew?" she says. "From Milan to South Africa, I thought perhaps one day I would end up on a luxury yacht somewhere." Then she laughs, "But I am the happiest now that I have ever been."

The Clarence Campeau Development Fund helped Bernadette achieve her dream. The Development Fund offers a variety of loans and grants for Métis businesses in Saskatchewan.

A photograph of Bernadette Lavoie, a woman with blonde wavy hair, wearing a black short-sleeved top and a silver watch, sitting in a dark leather chair and smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred interior space.

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