



SELF CONTAINED—Ladner's Sarah Wilson brings a personal touch to her own business Now & Zen which helps clients bring their house, or office space into orderly fashion. Philip Raphael photo

Well organized

Former hair stylist creates her own career in logical order

PHILIP RAPHAEL
EDITOR

Sarah Wilson was not a typical kid. One look at her bedroom would have told you that. Instead of a haphazard scattering of toys, books and clothes, everything in her room had a place, and every place had a thing—all trim and tidy.

Neatness ruled the day.

Years later today, it's the same story for the 26-year-old Ladner resident who has turned her love of keeping things in order into a recently minted business venture as a professional organizer.

"I guess I've been pretty organized all my life," says Wilson who runs Now & Zen (www.zenof-ficesolutions.com). "Even when I was young I couldn't go to sleep unless everything was a certain way."

And that meant books had to be neatly placed on shelves and Barbie dolls were positioned in an orderly line.

"I think I stopped at folding and putting away all their clothes," she adds.

But the principle of keeping things tidy stuck. And after leaving a career as a hair stylist, she

decided to work for herself. Although, at first she didn't know exactly where to focus her energy.

"I knew I needed to do something that was creative," Wilson says.

A trip to get some guidance from the staff at Youthworks in Tsawwassen—a pre-employment program for youth aged 15 to 30—helped define her strengths and interests and got her a referral to enroll in a self employment program.

With the idea of becoming a professional organizer firmly in mind Wilson completed her training in marketing, business set up and finance two months ago. She then joined the Professional Organizers in Canada and is now helping clients who are in need of a little straightening out when it comes to the state of their homes or office space.

And that is satisfying her creative desire.

"I also love working with people, and creating an environment for them where they can be organized. It gives me a very good feeling," she says.

Wilson says one of the biggest problems in dealing with clutter is the urge to hang on to possessions too long.

Her method of bringing order to chaos is to get to know her clients well. That way she can determine what items they will be willing to either part

with, pack up for storage, or organize for better, more clutter-free use.

"I go that extra mile to get to know them and ask plenty of questions, because for the client you have to develop a good sense of trust," she says. "After all, you're in their home or their office, sorting through their stuff."

And once the items are sorted, Wilson can suggest the best way to store the remaining goods.

"One of the biggest mistakes people make when they try to organize things themselves is going out and buying all kinds of storage devices that don't fit with their home."

Sometimes, others don't even get that far and are too daunted by the challenge of organizing and need a professional perspective to get the process off the ground.

"But you have to start somewhere, and for me that's pretty simple," she says. "After I've managed to help a client purge what they don't need, they are able to see what's left."

And once she's finished with them it usually brings a big relief for her customers.

"I've had people tell me they feel lighter," she says smiling.

■ editor@southdeltaleader.com

business

bizbits

Working for a cause

Clients of Mark's Work Wearhouse can help in the fight against breast cancer next week. On May 1 the stores, including the Trenant Park Square Shopping Centre location in Ladner, will donate \$5 to the Breast Cancer Society of Canada to help fund essential research when a customer spends \$65 or more. The fund raiser runs from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and the goal is to raise \$250,000 over the four hours. Mark's Work Wearhouse is part of the Canadian Tire family and operates 356 stores across Canada, including 43 L'Equipeur stores in Québec.