

Launching a new business can be challenging at the best of times but, starting a business during a global pandemic brings on a whole new dynamic. Meet Karen Everett and Nadine Facini, two Licensed Practical Nurses who started their own business, Ever New Foot Care, amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.



Karen graduated from NBCC Fredericton in 2005 and Nadine graduated from NBCC Fredericton in 2010. Since graduation both have been working at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital in Fredericton on 4SW, surgical unit. In addition, Karen also worked for the Victorian Order of Nurses for two years providing professional foot care and Nadine has been a casual Practical Nurse instructor at NBCC. Throughout their careers on the surgical unit, they have seen many patients experience long term complications from diabetes, peripheral neuropathy and cardiovascular diseases which have often resulted in amputations. Due to these experiences, Karen and Nadine wanted to help make a difference in their community by offering services that could help prevent some of these complications while providing preventative education regarding foot care.

With this vision they embarked on their self-employment journey in professional foot care. Both Karen and Nadine acquired their training in advanced foot care in 2019 and began to consult with ANBLPN regarding the guidelines for self-employment as an LPN. From there they collaborated with [Planet Hatch](#), an organization who supports start-up entrepreneurs by helping them grow into well-positioned companies that will contribute to New Brunswick's economic growth and community prosperity. With the assistance of Planet Hatch, they began meeting with banking institutions, accountants and lawyers who helped guide them in the development of their business plan. Once their business plan was finalized, they received approval for financing from the board of directors at Planet Hatch.

As they began to embark on their new business venture, they also consulted with other foot care business owners who provided them with valuable feedback on how to move forward with their business. They are very thankful for the guidance that was provided to them by Leah Hunt, LPN and owner/operator of Peppy Steps Foot Care and Julia Lewis, LPN, owner/operator of Julia Lewis Foot Care. Karen and Nadine also acquired the necessary additional insurance required as business operators (General Commercial Liability Insurance), incorporated their business through Cox & Palmer Law Firm and hired an accountant for their book-keeping and payroll.

Once these steps were in place, they implemented the necessary protocols to ensure the services they were providing were adhering to best practices to ensure the safety of their clients. They reviewed the [Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses](#) (CAFCN) publication on National Foot Care Competencies to align their practices with their recommendations. Through these recommendations they purchased an autoclave to ensure all instruments would be properly sterilized and a digital ultrasonic cleaner for pre-cleaning instruments prior to sterilization.

Karen and Nadine planned to hold the grand opening of their business on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. However, as COVID-19 began to spread in Canada and throughout our province, they made the difficult decision to post-pone their operations. Patient safety remains their top priority and although they were disappointed, they knew that there was no other option to ensure the safety of their clients and themselves.

Throughout the peak of the pandemic in New Brunswick, they continued to educate themselves on the recommendations being provided by Public Health and ANBLPN. As government began to lift some of the restrictions in place regarding COVID-19 and business operations, they began to implement their COVID-19 operational plan and set a re-opening date of May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Karen and Nadine secured the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) and had long-sleeved gowns made. They also implemented social distancing measures such as; ensuring their work stations were 2 meters apart with a divider in between, the waiting room was rearranged so that all seating was 2 meters apart and they staggered appointment times to ensure only one client was present at the clinic at any given time. They also had plexiglass installed at the front desk and offer touchless payment options through debit, credit and Apple pay. Each PPE garment is changed between clients, hand sanitizer was made accessible throughout the clinic, appropriate signage was put in place, and they enhanced their cleaning and disinfection processes between clients. Any client who books an appointment is pre-screened before coming to the clinic and are requested to wear a community face mask during their appointment.



Operations are well underway at Ever New Foot Care and Karen and Nadine are excited to be offering their professional foot care services to clients in need. Despite the set-back of COVID-19, their business venture is off to a successful start. Going forward, Karen and Nadine hope to see a standardized foot care curriculum and competencies in Canada as well as a national exam to provide consistency in basic and advanced foot care.

