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It's more like having a big family, serving supper.'*

ELENA MOORE



Elena Moore, who runs Julia's Beauty Shoppe in JP, says she was practically raised in a hair salon.

JAMAICA PLAIN

# For Elena at Julia's, it's hair in the family



# By the monument, a true JP institution

By Craig Nickels  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Elena Moore has worked in a hair salon since she was old enough to reach the phone in her mother's shop, and she sees no reason to stop now.

## Last Word

Moore owns Julia's Beauty Shoppe in Jamaica Plain, the oldest salon and one of the oldest businesses in Jamaica Plain. The shop, started by Moore's mother, Julia Spagnoletti, has been a part of JP for 75 years, remarkable in a neighborhood known for its diversity and change.

The salon itself can be described by what it's not: It's not a trendy place that serves tea and lemonade with its haircuts, and it's not a discount chain store that gets you in and out in 15 minutes or less. A simple black-and-white sign beckons customers.

**'She looks twenty years younger than all her friends. I hope she never retires.'**

GREG MOORE  
*Elena's son*

Helmet-style hair-dryers line the back wall. In the center of the side wall hang a few relics that, according to a hand-written note, belonged to Julia and date to 1938: a wood-handled hair dryer and a curling iron that had to be heated on a

gas burner.

As Moore sits behind her counter, neighborhood regulars wave in the window or stop in to chat.

"Maybe," she says, "they can talk old times." José Rivera, a longtime Jamaica Plain resident and regular customer, stops in to say hello. He assesses Moore this way: "You're Ellie, that's the best thing I can say." After a slight pause, he describes the salon. "This is the place you have to be and you just sit and listen."

Befitting that atmosphere, Moore prefers walk-ins to appointments.

"I don't like to keep appointments," she says. With walk-ins, "there's no pressure. It's more like having a big family serving supper."

She says she keeps a fairly solid group of regular customers, mostly ladies who come in weekly or every other week to get their hair set. Helen

Olsen, for example, estimates she's been getting her hair done here for 40 years.

Moore was raised in the part of the neighborhood that is now the Bromley-Heath housing development. She says she practically grew up in the back of her mother's shop, which started on the corner of Parker and Centre streets, then moved to the corner of Centre and Roseway streets.

The shop's been at its current location near the Civil War monument on Centre Street for 32 years. Moore politely declines to give her age but will say she is old enough to have three children, two grandchildren, and a great-grandchild; her husband, Thomas, died in 1994.

Given the modern decline in women getting their hair set weekly, business at the shop has slowed, and her regulars are getting older.

"Sometimes," she says, "it looks like I'm running the geriatric ward."

Times and styles have changed, says Moore. "She used to have five girls in here" until 9 or 10 at night, says Greg Moore. "Then the sixties came."

"Young people don't pay as much attention to their personal appearance," she says. "You can look out the window and see how many girls have long, unkempt hair, hair in ponytails, hair kept under a hat."

Now Moore works by herself. If she's not getting business, she'll chat with neighbors who walk by, or go home early.

Nevertheless, she has no plans to hang up her brush and scissors. She says the shop keeps her active and connected with the community.

"She looks twenty years younger than all her friends," says Greg.

"I hope she never retires."



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/PAT GREENHOUSE

Elena Moore (above and left) prepares Irene Nickerson, 74, a client for at least 30 years, for a perm. Many of her customers are longtimers, she says; many, too, stop by just to chat.