

# THE NORTHSIDE PHARMACY STORY



by Laura Vivoni



In the second half of the 1970's, Halina Jankowski and Rachel Parker met while working for a Greenpoint Pharmacy called Harrico. They were teenagers then and their pharmaceutical duties involved selling makeup and shampoo among other things. Their boss and mentor was a man called Edmund Charno, he took them in and gave them work while they were still in High School. Mr. Charno saw a lot of potential in these girls and suggested they attend Pharmacy School. Both of the Greenpoint native girls followed his advice and continued to work there until they graduated from Pharmacy School when they went from being cashiers to working behind the counter as Pharmacists. By then they had vast knowledge of every aspect of the Pharmacy for they had worked in every one of the areas.

In 1997 Mr. Charno passed away and the Pharmacy was sold. The girls were now women and they didn't want to keep on working in the Pharmacy with their mentor gone, so when the chance to buy their own Pharmacy came up they grabbed it.

Northside Pharmacy has been located in 182 Bedford Avenue for more than 100 years. The previous owner was a woman named Johanna who had gone to Pharmacy school with Rachel, so when she decided to sell she mentioned it to her friend and Rachel then mentioned it to Halina. Neither of them wanted to be in business by themselves so they joined forces and talked to their very supportive husbands who in turn lent them the money so that they could buy Northside Pharmacy.

Halina and Rachel run Northside Pharmacy with the lessons they learned from Mr. Charno. A Pharmacy should be more than just a place to get your medicine; it should involve personal service to all the clients. In Northside Pharmacy they want you to feel at home, they are customer oriented and eager to please. They are willing to call your doctor with questions you may have; they will call your insurance company and ask for a vacation override for your prescriptions when you are going to be out of town. At Northside Pharmacy they will talk to you and answer your questions immediately. If you have a baby that's sick they'll help you choose the right medicine for that fever or cold; they'll help you choose a medicine for that cough that's been keeping you awake at night and they will sell you those 4 pills from your prescription that you need until you can see your doctor again on Monday. They are very approachable pharmacists, unlike chain Pharmacies, they will get out from behind the counter and suggest you a remedy for that allergy that's been bothering you for days. They will even order that herbal shampoo you can't find anywhere else. They also provide customers with Fax service and copy machine service.

Northside Pharmacy likes to be in tune with the customer's needs. They pay attention to what the people in the neighborhood want, what things do they ask for, and they get it for them. They also like to get new products all the time; they go to Trade Shows and get stuff that you probably won't be able to find in many places. Halina is of Polish heritage and Rachel has Spanish heritage and they like to include products of their cultures.

They sell Polish products, Spanish products, and European products. They carry lines like Dr. Harris & Co. from England, Burt's Bee's products, the Kama Sutra line, soap petals...they like to find new things and good quality things. They like to be original in the items they sell.

Rachel and Halina have owned Northside Pharmacy since 1998 and recently they redid the Pharmacy and gave it an old fashioned look, they wanted to give it the old flare of the old Pharmacy and it looks great. Both Rachel and Halina are very happy with the decision they made of getting their own business; they are even following their mentor's tradition and they as well have convinced several employees of going to Pharmacy School. They are both married and Rachel's daughter Allyson and Halina's stepdaughter Margaret come from time to time to help out their moms in the Pharmacy.

A customer said that Northside Pharmacy has done a good job of catering to what people want. He comes here to buy what he calls "Health Food Store deodorant and mouthwash." He likes that they have what people want. "Northside Pharmacy maintains the neighborhood feeling that we all crave." He said.

So, the next time you feel like you are coming down with a cold, or if you are just looking for something to spend a fun evening with your mate (like the Kama Sutra products) and even if you just need to spike your hair and ran out of Spiking Glue, you just have to come down to Northside Pharmacy and you'll be set. ♣