Alumni open cell phone repair shop on St. Mary to create campus community

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Cell Phone Repair, a self-descriptive business, has claimed the top floor of the Subway on East St. Mary Boulevard, replacing the vape shop housed there since 2015.

"My plan was to always have a business, and my husband had the same dream," said Jamie Campos, co-owner. "We kept looking, and then, I guess you can say this opportunity fell in our lap."

Campos is an alumna of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, who received a bachelor's in psychology in 2005. Then, in 2013, she received her master's in business administration also from UL Lafayette. She and her husband, Carlos Campos, own Cell Phone Repair. He also attended UL Lafayette in 2005 for a bachelor's in pre-law.

"We really wanted to cater to college students, the campus life," Carlos Campos said about why they decided to open on campus. He added because he and his wife were also students, they knew they could benefit students with their prices.

"We wanted to make this a sanctuary for students," Jamie Campos said.

Carlos Campos said the store opened spur of the moment. Preparations took approximately one and a half months over the summer, which included a renovation of the 900-square-foot store.

Cell phone cases and accessories hang neatly along the wall of what was previously the entrance to Elite Vapors of Lafayette and a dining area for Subway customers.

Carlos and Jamie Campos said the owners of Elite Vapors of Lafayette found it too difficult to commute from their location in Lake Charles every day, which is how they acquired the space.

Ross Martel, the store manager, explained the changes upstairs.

"Since school started, we had people walking in and asking that very question, 'This isn't a place for us to sit and hang out anymore?' Of course you can," he said. "This is a cell phone repair shop, but I'm not going to kick you out."

Two weeks into the business, Jamie Campos mentioned they have a lot of planned additions, including additional seating, entertainment and a fireplace for the winter.

Jamie, Carlos and Martel said they have seen an increase in foot traffic for the business.

"We actually did a promotion where we handed out bottles of water, and ever since we've done that we've been getting more business every day," Martel said. "I'm pretty confident we're going to end up doing very well."

Martel, a Louisiana Technical College graduate, is currently the only employee. He mentioned his passion for working on computers and hardware.

"I think helping people is the best part of the whole shebang," Martel said.

"We work on and sell and buy computers, tablets, game consoles, phones, pretty much any electronic device, even drones," he added.

Martel had been with the Cell Phone Repair franchise for a year before starting at the campus location.

"I think we're starting to see awareness that your phone can be fixed, and you don't have to go buy all the latest technology," Jamie Campos said. "Your stuff can be restored and fixed, and I think that provides some relief to students for sure."

"We price match, so we'll always be the best price in town," Martel added.

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Jamie Campos and Martel also explained the myriad ways they can provide service, such as accepting Cajun Cash. All students, regardless of their school, can receive a 10 percent discount with their student I.D., and an additional 5 percent can be taken off through Facebook promotions. Even faculty and public servicemen (firemen, police, military, etc.) can receive discounts.

"Opening my own business on campus where my dream all started can at least be inspiring to other students," Jamie Campos said.

Although Carlos and Jamie Campos manage Cell Phone Repair, they also have other jobs. Jamie Campos manages her parents' business, an oil field company called Wireline Rental Tools, and Carlos Campos works for Baker Hughes, Inc.

"Being patient is the best part for me," Carlos Campos said. "Being secure and knowing that hard work is going to pay off. We wanted to put this store here and us being UL alumni shows that you can succeed after school. We wanted to put that out there."