



Kinky Tresses

COVID-19 can't stop new all-natural downtown Wilson manufacturer, shop

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Kinky Tresses opened a downtown Wilson storefront under the name Samora Naturals just two months before the state of North Carolina shuttered with COVID-19, but that didn't stop this determined scientist-turned-entrepreneur.

Owner Shawna Moses managed a family and a career as a medical laboratory scientist before developing a line of products to bring moisture and manageability to her natural hair.

"The Coconut Mango Hair Butter was an instant transformation for me," said the 42-year-old Jamaica native.

After sharing the products with loved ones, she developed a following from others looking to embrace the beauty of their own hair. She soon funneled all her energy into her home-based business dubbed Kinky Tresses.

As e-commerce took off though, she knew she had to find a brick-and-mortar location and she found a great space in downtown Wilson. While keeping up with online orders, crews renovated the historic building at 108 Tarboro St. W. into a combination store and manufacturing space. At the end of January 2020, she debuted her all-natural skincare products such as the Coffee Lovers scrub and Detoxifying Charcoal Soap under the Samora Naturals brand alongside her established Kinky Tresses products. However, she was soon forced to shutter her storefront because of a statewide pandemic lockdown.

"Access to Samora pretty much was in-person and the brand was so new, so we had to make the decision to focus on Kinky Tresses and the products people were still able to access online."

With the help of the RIOT Accelerator Program Wilson, Moses overcame supply chain disruptions and navigate evolving customer expectations plus a six-month closure of the shop. She also was able to double the monthly revenue since April of 2020.

"It is a privilege to be able to provide customers with healthy products that help them to relax, recharge and be the best versions of themselves," Moses said. "There is a saying that you can't pour from an empty cup and that is so true. The pandemic has taught us that self-care isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. We should prioritize taking care of ourselves."

Samora Naturals is open Tuesdays to Saturdays to sell the popular variety of hair and skincare products. Moses is constantly experimenting to develop the next best seller while her staff works hard to keep up with in-person and online sales.

"Our skin is our largest organ, it plays an important part in the maintenance of our health so it is really important to take care of it," Moses said. "Having a self-care routine with safe, healthy products that properly cleanse and restore it is necessary."

