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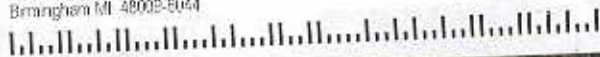
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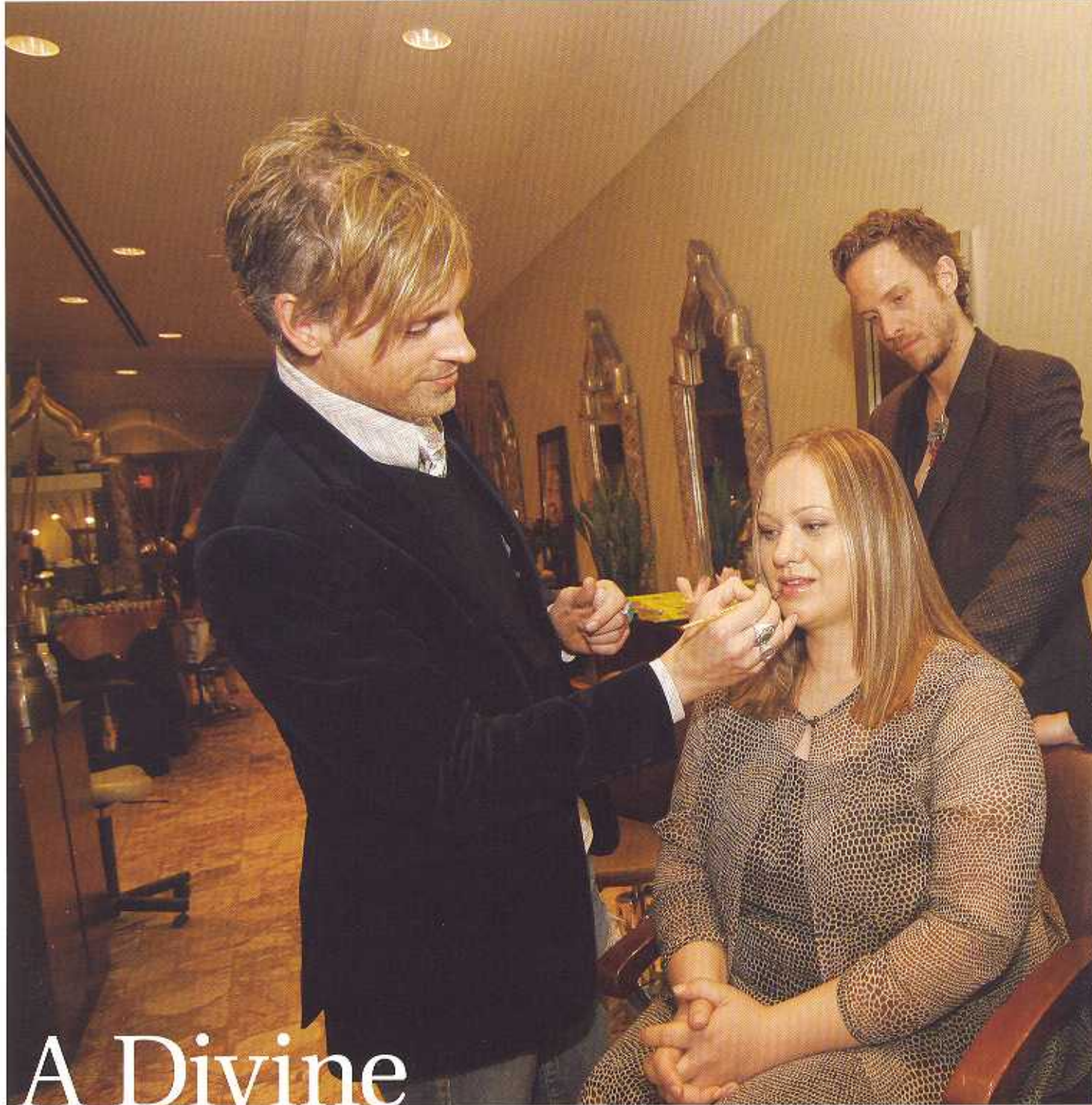
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A Divine Mission

*Birmingham business owner
transforms women into goddesses*

Lisa Black-Elk gets primped at Torro in Bloomfield Township by Jon Lieckfett (front) and salon owner John Tarro (back) as Charlene Proctor, founder of The Goddess Network looks on. The program helps women, many who have been victims of abuse, empower themselves.



Before *The Da Vinci Code*, there was Charlene Proctor. To celebrate the principle of the divine feminine, this Birmingham business owner has created an online community of more than 29,000 women.

Proctor's Web community, The Goddess Network, is a collection of self-empowerment strategies, including daily affirmations, columns, meditations and forums. She has self-published two books, *Let Your Goddess Grow!* and *The Women's Book of Empowerment*, and has appeared on multiple radio shows across the country. It's a dramatically different career path for the former social scientist who did organizational consulting for manufacturers.

"One day, I was driving to work, and when I pulled up to the building I just froze," says Proctor, who lives in Bloomfield Township with husband, Tom, and sons Jason, 17, and Vaughn, 15. "With my hands stuck to the steering wheel, I thought, 'I don't know if I can do this one more day.'" Proctor says she had spent her life pursuing a "male-oriented model of success, which was very analytical and hierarchical driven. It had really negated all the intuitive and right-brained side of all the wonderful things that I had." That, she says, was the day The Goddess Network was born.

Seven years later, Proctor – who has earned degrees from Indiana University and Wayne State University, and a doctorate of philosophy from the University of Michigan – continues to grow The Goddess Network with *The Empowerment Show*, joining forces with Lighthouse PATH, a Pontiac-based organization that supports the homeless.

"We talk a lot about old programs that run our lives," Proctor says about one segment of the project for women who are living in shelters and have been homeless and victims of domestic violence. "[Participants] will learn to stand on their own and understand that even though past

experiences can be difficult, they provide us with a level of wisdom that we carry with us our whole lives."

Proctor, 47, supplies the women with her books and they also attend "webinars" online at www.thegoddessnetwork.net, participating in lessons that include confidence and self-sufficiency. Live workshops at the office round out the experience and give the women guidance. "That human element gets them to open their own voices," Proctor says.



Takesha Davis of Pontiac, with Charlene Proctor. Davis received a makeover courtesy of Proctor's Goddess Network.

Leah Black-Elk, 25, of Waterford, had been a victim of abuse, and had been in and out of shelters. The young mother of two children had also lost custody of her 7-year-old son. After taking part in her seven-week online program, *The Empowerment Show*, over the summer, she says the experience gave her confidence "to follow what I wanted," which was to regain custody of her child and find housing for her family.

She left Lighthouse PATH at the end of 2006, moving into a three-bedroom apartment with both children. She has also gone back to school to finish her nursing program.

"It took me a little bit, but I started reading the affirmations and reading the book and listening to Charlene, and it helped me to get my life back on track," Black-Elk says. "You get a warm feeling from her. Obviously she's doing something good, to volunteer her expertise to help women." ♦