

Collins & Associates Accounting and Tax Service offers tax and full accounting services with exceptional service

By Jackie Giroux
Reporter

With tax season just getting underway, the staff at **Collins & Associates Accounting & Tax Service**, located at 3352 Dean Rd. in Lambertville, is ready to provide clients with fast, friendly, exceptional service.

Laura Collins, owner of the business, her son Jim and three seasonal tax preparers, along with Nancy Brancheau, who has been office manager for nine years, makes up the staff at **Collins & Associates**.

Even though tax season is a very busy time at **Collins & Associates**, clients can count on fast, friendly service. Pick-up and drop-off service and free second opinions are available.

Another benefit of having **Collins & Associates** prepare your tax return is that they triple check every return before it is returned to their clients. "We provide a free triple check," Laura said. "We look for input errors and how we can save the client more money. The more eyes we have looking at every return, the better."

Tax preparers at **Collins & Associates** search for deductions so that more money goes in the client's pocket rather than the government's. "We dig for every deduction. We know how to ask the right questions to get them (the client) more money back on their returns," Laura said. "If we don't know the answers, we research to find the answers."

Collins & Associates strives to be accommodating to their clients. They accept appointments, walk-ins, and email, fax or mail for clients that have moved away. "We do taxes for all states that have an income tax," Laura said.

Showing appreciation to those serving in the military by preparing their tax returns at no charge is a service unique to **Collins & Associates**. "This is our 4th Annual Military Appreciation Drive," Laura said.

Any person, who is active in the military, reserves or National Guard, or their spouses if they are actively deployed overseas, can take advantage of this service. In addition, veterans can save up to \$60 off their tax return.

"It's been very successful from the beginning. More troops contact us each year," Laura said. "If they can't come in they can email, fax or phone."

This service for those active in the military is available throughout the tax season. "If they have been deployed overseas for two or three years and haven't filed taxes, we can do that for them," Laura said. She said that they have prepared taxes for those in the military from over 20 states.

Additionally, Laura said, "\$10 from each paid return is donated to local military charities. We give a lot to Heroes in Action." Heroes in Action is not subsidized, relying solely on donations to provide aid to members of the military and their families.

"Because we are owners, we have control over what we charge and what we can do," Laura explained. In addition to not charging for military tax returns, she said they give breaks to clients who may have fallen on hard times. A 10 percent discount is given to senior citizens. Current clients receive a coupon for a discount off their tax preparation as a thank you for the support they give **Collins & Associates** throughout the year. Another break offered to clients is free

tax preparation for dependents of a client.

Additional offers can be found at their website, www.collinsaccountingandtax.com.

To insure that they are able to provide exceptional service to their clients, Laura said that everyone in the office has continuous education and up-to-date information regarding tax laws.

Along with tax services, **Collins & Associates** offers full accounting services to individuals and businesses from small to large firms. "The majority of our business is from individuals, however we do have a lot of business clients," Laura said.

"We can do payroll, bank reconciliations, bank statements and bookkeeping services," she said. Some of the additional services offered at **Collins & Associates** are: proactive tax planning, retirement planning, business and personal financial planning, consulting services, on site analysis, investment review, estate planning, asset protections, budgeting and forecasting.

Free initial consultations with no obligation are offered to individuals as well as to businesses.

Laura has owned **Collins & Associates** for the past 13 years, purchasing it in 1997.

She has resided in Lambertville since she was 18. At the age of 28 and the mother of three small children, Laura returned to college and received a degree in accounting from Siena Heights University in Adrian in 1994.

In 1993 she was offered a position with the previous owners of the CPA firm, which she later purchased. When the owner married, moved away and decided that the daily drive was too much, Laura decided



Laura Collins, owner of Collins & Associates Accounting & Tax Service, with her son Jim, who also works as a tax preparer. The business is located at 3352 Dean Rd. in Lambertville and is ready to provide clients with fast, friendly, exceptional service for the upcoming tax season and throughout the year.



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to purchase the business. She became an Enrolled Agent with the IRS in 2005.

Laura said, "I enjoy meeting people, the fact that everyone's situation is different and finding ways to save them money."

Laura's three children, Jim, Nicole and Sherrie, have followed in their mother's footsteps with an interest in business, finance and accounting.

At one time all three of her children worked with her at **Collins & Associates**. "My son still works here. The girls went out into the corporate world for more experience," Laura said. "I'm looking forward to them coming back to the business."

Jim joined the Air Force after he graduated from high school. He has attended Monroe Co. Community College and has a two-year degree in business. He is currently working toward obtaining a bachelor's degree.

In her spare time, Laura is very involved in the community. "I am president of the BBA (Bedford Business Association), treasurer of the Bedford High School Alumni Association, secretary/treasurer of Lambertville Pride and trustee of the Bedford Community Foundation."

Laura and **Collins & Associates** have also received recognition and awards. "Our company received a certificate from the Monroe Rotary Club Service Above Self for 2008 in recognition of valuable contributions to our community," she said. She received a Michigan Week Minuteman Award this past May and was also named VIP of the Month from Buckeye CableSystem for being an outstanding citizen in the community.

Professionally, Laura belongs to the National Association of Enrolled Agents, Michigan Society of Enrolled Agents, Ohio Society of Enrolled Agents and the National Association of Tax Professionals.

Collins & Associates Accounting & Tax Service is open during tax season Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. After tax season hours return to Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For questions, more information or to make an appointment, **Collins & Associates** can be reached by calling (734) 854-2926.