



CATAWBA COUNTY

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COSMETIC ARTS ACADEMY BRIGHTENS OUTLOOK OF AREA TEENS

HICKORY, N.C. — Since 2002, Cosmetic Arts Academy of Hickory has been encouraging area teenage girls in the Teen Up Summer Program with free makeovers.

Alicia Fisher, director of the school, said she started donating her school's services to girls in the Summer Teen Up Program as a way to get more involved in the community.

Teen Up is a program of Catawba County Social Services that encourages teen boys and girls to make wise life choices. The program serves approximately 350 middle and high school students each school year.

Approximately 30-50 Catawba County girls participate each year in the Summer Teen Up Program. There is a similar program for teen boys. Judy Ingold, a social worker with the Teen Up girls program, said the trip to the beauty school "is a huge self-esteem booster for these girls."

She added, "We stress being their best selves. Part of that is taking care of your hair and nails."

Kathy Pitman, an instructor at Cosmetic Arts Academy for 10 years, is usually on hand to welcome the teens. She said she first brings them into the classroom and talks about careers as a hairdresser. She also encourages them to stay in school.

Then she lets them pick from the different services the school offers. Most get new hair styles, facials and manicures. While they are there, the teens are able to talk to the beauty school students about the best way to maintain their new look.



Alicia Fisher (left), director of Cosmetic Arts Academy, and Kathy Pitman, an instructor at the school, were recently recognized by Catawba County's Teen Up Program for their years of offering free makeovers and encouragement to the students in the program.

“When they first come in, some of them look a little scared,” Pitman said. “By the time they’re done, they’re laughing and giggling, and it looks like the weight of the world is off their shoulders.”

Fisher said that if the girls maintain their grades in the first two years of high school, they can begin to take career cosmetology classes during their junior and senior years of high school. This is a great incentive to keep up their grades and stay in school.

In addition, she said the program lets her cosmetology students see how they can give back to the community through their professional skills.

Since the Teen Up program has been taking students to Cosmetic Arts Academy, several have graduated from the school and received their cosmetology licenses.

The Summer Teen Up Program is largely funded through donations. Additional funds are needed to continue this program next summer. For more information, contact Judy Ingold at 828-695-4432 or judyi@catawbacountync.gov. You may now donate online to the Teen Up program and other special programs operated by Catawba County Social Services. These programs either rely totally on local donations, or need additional funding to fully meet the need. To donate online, go to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/dss> and click on the red “Donate Now” button.