

a legacy WEAVED

Cosmetology senior crafts wigs for family members with hair loss

The day slowly turned into dusk and settled into nightfall, but **Licole Smith**, 12, was wide awake. Smith found herself absorbed in the weaving of blonde locks into a mesh cap, measuring out everything, to make sure the first wig she ever made was perfect. From 6 p.m. to 5 a.m., Smith worked through the night on the strenuous task of making the wig.

"When doing [a wig] by hand, you are gluing it down and installing it yourself," Smith said. "Putting [the wig] on my head and doing everything else, plucking, bleaching, making the wig, everything, you are looking at a good four hours."

Smith's interest in wig making and cosmetology began at the age of 9 when she braided her first head, but it was not until 10th grade that Smith was compelled to make her own wig.

"When I [made] my first wig and I put it on my head and showed my mom. She did not recognize it at first, she thought it was my real hair," Smith said. "But then she looked back at it and she [asked] if I really just made [a wig]. I [told her] yes I did, all by myself."

Smith's skill would take on a very personal meaning for her mother, **Leslie Smith**. Her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, and the treatment caused her to lose her hair.

"[Although] losing my hair was the least of

my worries. Licole took me on as a special project," Leslie said. "She [made] sure that when I did get a wig, it was very pretty and special [for me]."

Smith came to the rescue for a family member again. **Linda Manigault**, her grandmother, suffered from hair loss due to medication.

"As I got older and was still on medications, I started losing more [hair] and it bothered me quite a bit," Manigault said. "When COVID-19 started, I was just so glad that I had Licole here,

"I (TOLD HER), 'YES I DID, ALL BY MYSELF.'"

since most salons closed."

"I really got more into making wigs for my mom and my grandmother," Smith said. "I got into wigs for them because I wanted them to feel special again. Putting wigs on my grandmother and mom made them feel like themselves, something they had not felt in a while."

Smith had been interested in making wigs for as long as she could remember, but it was not until COVID-19 quarantine that she was really able to explore her passion. With more free time in isolation, social media became an outlet, as well as an inspiration for Smith.

"Frontals and wigs became a big thing and that is all that I would watch on YouTube," Smith said. "I studied how to make wigs from

social media. I studied it for three videos and then I just did it."

While Smith, a member of the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies cosmetology program, may have been able to make a wig by hand, she is still learning the process of making wigs with a sewing machine. It is a harder concept to grasp but faster and less complicated.

"With the sewing machine, you mark your grid lines out on the dome head before you stick it under the sewing machine," Smith said. "Then you use nylon thread and you just sew it onto the dome cap while running it through the machine the whole time."

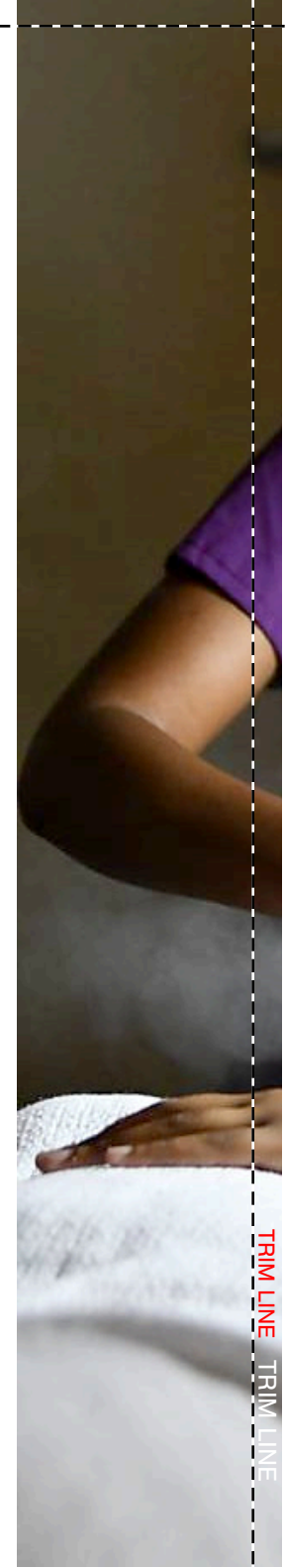
Smith has been in the cosmetology program for the past two years and although the cosmetology program mainly focuses on salon skills, Smith wants to combine her passion for making wigs with the cosmetic training.

"I make wigs on my own time, but I really want to own my own business selling hair and supplies, and have my own salon as well," Smith said.

While Smith's dream of owning a business may seem far away, she has already started making a name for herself.

"I have sold [wigs] but it is something I need to do more," Smith said. "[I want to] start investing in myself more and just doing it."

**Story by Grayson Taylor
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TRIM LINE TRIM LINE

WHAT DO YOU USE TO STYLE YOUR HAIR?



17%

blow dryer



14%

comb



21%

curling iron



48%

straightener

100 students were polled
graphics by e. dodd



NEW COLOR: (above) **Moorea Sulsona**, 12, removes color from her client's hair. "I was feeling very happy with the color we achieved at the end," Sulsona said; photo by e.chadwick

SPRING 52

Customer is allowed to have objects outside of the margin.

TRIM LINE