



Vaughan school event promises to be 'mane' attraction

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For high school teacher Antonio Panetta, hands-on experience mixed with a charitable element is a personal touch he has added to his classroom year after year.

Since joining the cosmetology department three years ago at Holy Cross Catholic Academy in Woodbridge, Mr. Panetta has organized the Style-A-Thon. It's set to take place Dec. 9.

The annual one-day event allows students from grades 10 to 12 a chance to provide cosmetic services to the school community at affordable prices.

Not only do students get experience, but the money raised will go to HealthyKids International, a division of the Sick Kids Foundation.

"It opens students' eyes and it gives them the whole salon experience. It teaches them how to book appointments, how to sell, while taking care of the less fortunate. It makes them a better person," Mr. Panetta said.

This Vaughan resident has had his fair share of heartbreak.

Mr. Panetta has lost a brother and sister to cancer, his mother to heart disease and a niece, who died from a rare cellular disease.

"My family has been through quite a bit. I've been through thick and thin and that is what gives me the drive," he said.

"It is best to give back than to wallow in your sorrow. It has just driven me for many years and now I just want to get that through to my students," Mr. Panetta said.

Supervised by professionals in the field, students will work round-the-clock for their charity of choice by providing haircuts, styling and manicures.

Mr. Panetta allowed his students to vote on charities that were closest to their hearts. When The Hospital for Sick Children reigned supreme, the teacher made a few phone calls and learned HealthyKids International could benefit from a donation.

HealthyKids International supports the international projects under The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Their programs are based in a variety of countries worldwide, including Africa and Southeast Asia.

The cosmetology students will also sell raffle tickets and encourage their fellow students to participate in the silent auction.

Last year's Style-A-Thon raised \$1,300, which is a substantial amount given some of the services can cost as low as \$3.