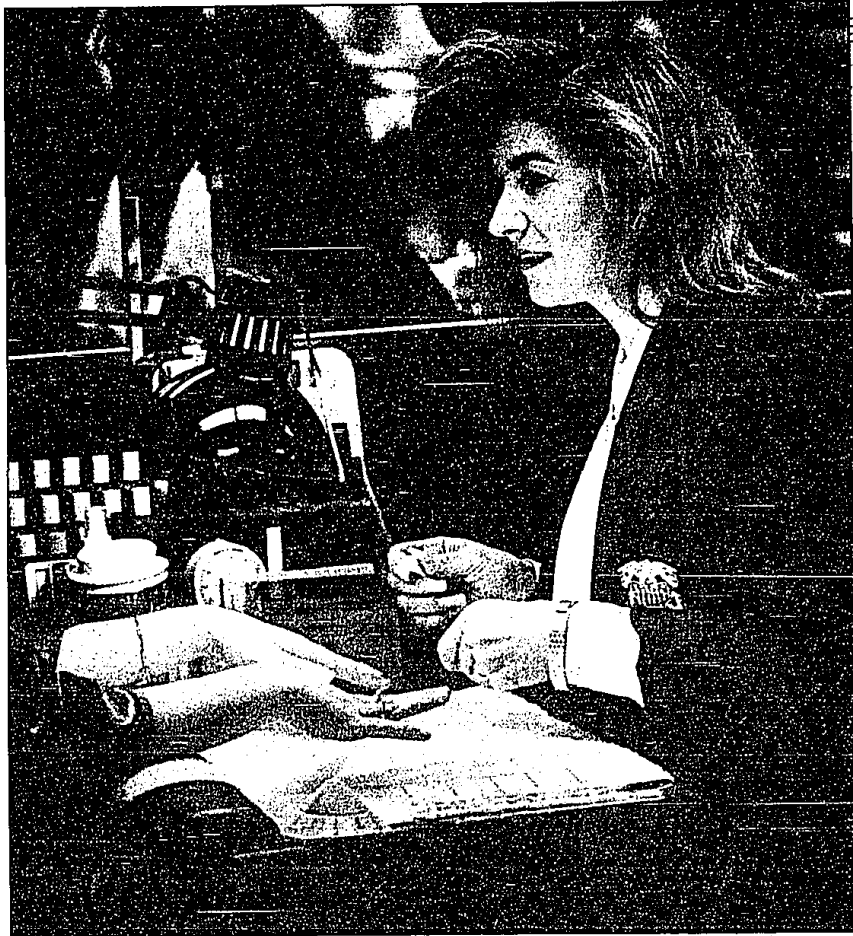




Wash 'n
rinse: Above,
Kathy Senda
rinses the
hair of a Sarah
Fisher resi-
dent. Right,
Rina Sulla
performs a
facial on Ka-
thy Breen,
recreational
therapist at
the Sarah
Fisher Cen-
ter.



Present nails: A Sarah Fisher resident shows her nails for grooming by Lisa Weaver.

BILL BRESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Salon offers pampering to Sarah Fisher girls

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

For many women and girls, having their hair done and nails manicured is one sure way to help shake off the post-holiday let-down and start the new year on an upbeat note.

That's what Julie Ivanovic thought when she invited girls from the Sarah Fisher Home in Farmington Hills to a free "do" at her beauty salon.

"Every holiday I would think about doing something for kids," said the owner of the Robert Anthony Salon in Farmington Hills. "Now that I own my own business, I can."

Ivanovic, a Farmington Hills resident, heard a radio ad promoting the Sarah Fisher Home and decided to offer free hair styling and manicures to girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Kathy Breen, recreational therapist at Sarah Fisher, jumped at the idea.

"This is the first time for this," Breen said. "Most of our kids need a way to develop self-esteem. What better way than to make yourself look good."

The young customers, like Crystal, 13, liked the idea. About 20 of them took up the offer for the free styling.

"Yea, I liked the idea," said Crystal, bedecked with smock and hair curlers. "I wanted them to give me a perm."

Ivanovic, who opened her new business on Dec. 14 in the Regency Plaza Mall on 12 Mile just east of Orchard Lake Road, said this would be a way of paying back the community. Her operators agreed and gave their time for free to the kids.

"I just started here," said Gita Markus, a native of Lithuania. "I think it's a nice thing to do."

Renee Fishell, a Farmington Hills native who has worked with Ivanovic for years, said she liked the idea of serving the young customers.

"We talked about it," she said. "We liked the idea."

The enthusiasm of the beauticians and cosmetologist rubbed off on some of the girls. Devon, 13, found a common bond with



Beauty treatment: Gita Markus has a permanent treatment to a young resident's beauty needs.

Fishell. After Fishell said she had attended Dunckel Middle School, Devon chimed in, "That's where I go."

And they have more than that in common. Fishell is a nail specialist, an ambition of her younger friend.

"When I was little, I used to put tape on my fingers and polish them," Devon said. "Then I would show my mother. It's something I'd like to do."

Breen said the free hair styling is just one way the community supports Sarah Fisher, including activities over the holiday period such as swimming, and tickets to sporting events and "The Nutcracker."

"This is so nice because we have a lot of Christmas activities, but then usually not much after," Breen said.

Youngsters staying at the home usually come from families in crisis. And although many do return home during the holidays, many don't. That just makes them lonelier.

Giving the girls a new look for the new year has not only given them a lift, it's brought out the best in Ivanovic's regular customers.

"When some of my regular customers called to make an appointment, I told them what we were doing and they asked if they could help out," Ivanovic said. "They're doing things like bringing in lunch and snacks for the girls. They really like the idea."

In fact, the idea has been such a hit, that Ivanovic plans to make it a holiday tradition.

"We plan to do it for every holiday, especially Christmas and Easter."

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