

A beautiful day

Coventry High cosmetology students use their skills to give local woman the royal treatment

By **KENDRA PORT**
klolio@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — It was a day full of beauty and pampering for 50-year-old Coventry Skilled Nursing and Rehab patient Celia Garcia, who visited Coventry High School Friday morning for some special treatment from students and staff in the cosmetology department.

Coventry High School's cosmetology program falls under the school's Career and Technical Education Center and this year, about 83 students enrolled, led by teachers Lisa Clift and Joanne Gorman.

Clift and the students met with Garcia last month to establish a beauty plan for her big day. Garcia has been at Coventry Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation for the last seven years and requires a ventilator in the evening. Admissions Coordinator Elaine Bigos said she thought Garcia could use a sort of pick me up and knew just who to call.

"Every now and then we try do a sort of Make a Wish-like project for patients," said Bigos. "A couple of years ago I was able to arrange for one of our chronic ventilator patients to go Fenway Park to see the Boston Red Sox. I saw the kind of joy it brought him and his family."

In March junior cosmetology students visited the Coventry Senior Center to perform manicures on residents. Clift said giving back and participating in community events is all part of their learning.

"This is a good learning experience because we get to apply what we've learned," said Clift. "I try to get them out of their comfort zone, and after they do things they say 'it's awesome being involved in the community.'"

As cosmetologists the students need to be comfortable working with clients from a wide range of ages, not only in performing services but also in terms of communication.

"I'm proud of the juniors," said Clift. "We try to instill upon them that



Above: Submitted photo; Below: Photo by Kendra Port

ABOVE: Celia Garcia, center, and Coventry High School cosmetology students smile for a photo after they gave Garcia a full hair and makeup treatment.

BELOW: Ashlyn Harrington gives Garcia a manicure while her hair color sets.



See **STUDENTS**, page A3



Photos by Kendra Port

ABOVE: Eliza Amato mixes the color used on Garcia's hair.
BELOW: Instructor Lisa Clift (left) and Coventry High School Junior Cassidy Lopez-Reyes color sections of Garcia's hair at the school salon Friday morning.



Students

Continued from page A1

if they want a community they're going to be proud of then they have to be part of making it the community they want. Giving back to the community is what makes it a better place. Kindness is free. It doesn't cost anything."

In the program students learn about hair cutting, coloring, and styling; barbering; nails; skin care and massage therapy in the school's salon. Once they finish the program they graduate with the skills to work in a variety of different settings and human service careers. They will eventually graduate and take the State Board Licensing Exam to obtain a Cosmetology license.

Kassidy Lopez-Reyes took on Garcia's hair coloring, selecting a deep and rich red for her long locks, which were also given a fresh cut.

Eliza Amato prepared the color, and Ashlyn Harrington treated Garcia to a refreshing manicure. MedTech donated their services to transport Garcia to the high school that morning.

"I am thrilled to have a community connection with Coventry Health Center and to be able to provide services for our seniors in long term care," said Lori Ferguson, Director of the Coventry High School Career and Technical Center. "I think it is so valuable for our students to be around a variety of clients, especially our seniors who get a great deal of satisfaction from being with younger people."

Ferguson said she is looking forward to a long and valuable partnership with Genesis Coventry Center.

"It was so worth seeing that smile on Celia's face today," she added.

*Kendra Port on Twitter
 @kendraport*