

WASH, RINSE, CUT ... AND BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK

Josephine Mayfield, her head covered in orange and blue twist-flex rods, is at Majestic Hair Design in Irondequoit for a wash and roller set.

But owner Debbie Wise, shown above, is slipping in another service—a blood pressure screening—for free while Mayfield is under the hair dryer.

Wise stares at the digital blood pressure monitor. Mayfield closes her eyes, cups her hands in her lap and breathes slowly.

The numbers stop flashing.

“173 over 116,” Wise says.

Mayfield grimaces. She’d confessed at the beginning of her appointment to skipping her blood pressure medicine this morning, but now adds new information.

“I think I might’ve missed two or three days,” she answers.

Wise stays encouraging, congratulating her on speaking up. “Before you leave, I’m going to get you some literature.”

Wise is one of nine hair salon and barber shop owners who have become community health educators, people who have been trained to take blood pressures, encourage clients to see their doctors if the readings are higher than normal, and pass out health-related material.

They are part of a group of 25 stylists and barbers in the Rochester area who offer blood pressure monitoring as part of a communitywide health campaign supported by Trillium Health and the High Blood Pressure Collaborative.

Salons and barbershops are ideal places to raise awareness about health disparities in African American and Latino communities, says Phyllis Jackson, one of the Get It Done program organizers and the community wellness project manager at Common Ground Health.

People congregate there, they’re comfortable there, and they share their most personal stories there. These places are where long-term and trusting relationships are nurtured.

**37 BARBERSHOPS
AND SALONS**
HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE
GET IT DONE INITIATIVE



Cassandra McCrea-June, who owns Diva Defined in Rochester, puts it this way: “Everything gets shared in the chair.”

The nine trained community health educators are paid a stipend and required to spend 10 hours on education every week, with at least two of those hours dedicated to blood pressure screenings. They document their findings and follow-up with clients on their next visit.

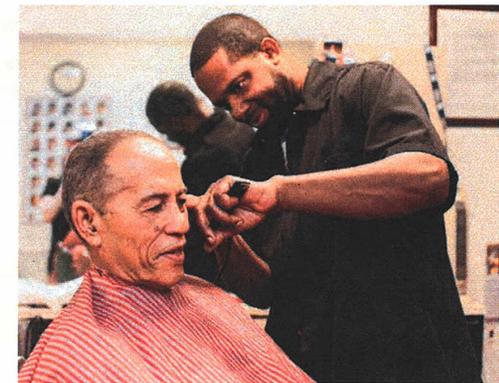
They also attend monthly meetings to learn new information from guest speakers, take refresher courses, and plan events such as the Get It Done initiative’s annual Health and Hair Symposium, meant to increase awareness about the link between hair and overall health.

More than 150 stylists, barbers, nursing students and cosmetologists-in-training attended the 2017 event.

“Everything gets shared in the chair.”

— Cassandra McCrea-June,
stylist and community
health educator

45 BARBERS & STYLISTS
HAVE SERVED AS
**COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATORS
OR PEER LEADERS**



Four times a year, healthcare providers—nurses and residents from area colleges, retired nurses and other volunteers—come into all 25 sites to give free blood pressure screenings.

If a reading is high, clients are given additional information on contacting area healthcare providers, as well as other resources such as therapists and nutritionists.

It’s common for people to make an appointment with a physician for the first time about their high blood pressure after one of these screenings.

McCrea-June isn’t letting herself off the hook. She is being treated for high blood pressure and can relate to the clients she is trying to help—a role she doesn’t take lightly.

“I can’t save someone’s life, but I can steer them in the right direction to help extend their life,” she says. “I feel awesome about that.”