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# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **COSMETOLOGY GRADUATE MAKES MARK ON THE FASHION WORLD**

To Wharton County Junior College graduate and professional stylist Heather Hutson, working with hair means a whole lot more than simply shearing off lengthy locks.

“I used to love the feeling I got right after having my hair fixed,” the 24-year-old said. “I want to help people feel their prettiest and be more confident.”

A graduate of the WCJC Cosmetology Program, Hutson is currently working for the Albert Luiz Salon in Sugar Land. For the past six weeks, she has worked as a full-time hair designer. It’s her dream job.

“I never thought I would be here, but I always wanted to be,” she said. “I love it. It’s never the same thing and I can’t wait to meet whoever will cross my path today.”

A 2008 Needville High School graduate, Hutson obtained an Associate’s Degree in general studies and a cosmetology certificate from WCJC in 2012. It was time well spent.

“I learned so much in school here,” she said. “The teachers were very helpful and open to questions.”

Jacqueline Kuehn, WCJC’s Cosmetology Program Director, remembers Hutson as a talented student who possessed the dedication required to excel at her studies.

“Heather was a great student. She was very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the latest style and trends,” Kuehn said.

WCJC’s Cosmetology Program covers the full gamut of hair and beauty services, including everything from coloring to styling to makeup analysis to facial treatments. In addition to classroom lectures, there’s also plenty of hands-on training with clients in the lab. The coursework lasts 11 months for full-time day students and 18 months for those enrolled in the night program.

Program participants come from outside the boundaries of Wharton County, traveling from Victoria, the Woodlands and Weimar, just to name a few. Kuehn said employment opportunities for graduates are vast, with jobs for hairstylists, hairdressers and cosmetologists projected to grow 13 percent between now and 2022. Average starting salaries are between \$25,000 and \$35,000 per year.

“Demand for hair coloring, hair straightening and other advanced hair treatment has risen in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue over the coming decade,” Kuehn said.

It didn’t take long after graduation for Hutson to find a place at Albert Luiz Salon. Her initial year was spent in a demanding apprenticeship, one designed to train hair designers in the latest techniques of the trade.

It was a test of patience and perseverance, Hutson said.

“You definitely have to practice and study. It definitely pushes you,” she said. “But if it’s something you like, you’re going to want to take the extra time to do it right.”

Hutson distinguished herself during the apprenticeship, so much so that she had the singular opportunity to accompany Albert Luiz to Fashion Week in New York City. The five-day event was life changing.

“It was an awesome experience,” she said. “I would love to eventually be a lead stylist at Fashion Week.”

Hutson will also be featured in an upcoming issue of *Estetica* magazine, which is doing an article on the importance of mentoring programs in the careers of new stylists.

Since completing the apprenticeship, Hutson has worked full-time for Albert Luiz Salon in Sugar Land. One of the best parts of her job is helping clients feel better about themselves.

“We’re trained to know what looks good on you,” Hutson said.

Not that there aren’t challenges. For example, clients who come in with a picture of a famous supermodel – fully expecting to be miraculously transformed – don’t always get their wish.

“There are limitations to what we can do,” Hutson said with a grin. “Your comb is not a wand.”

For more information on the WCJC Cosmetology Program, visit the website at [www.wcjc.edu](http://www.wcjc.edu)