

MAKEOVER MARVEL - H2O

BY LINDSEY GRAHAM

THE BEFORE



THE CONSULT



THE COLOR



THE PEDICURE



THE BLOWDRY



THE CUT



THE MAKEUP



"I feel like a kid at Christmas! I'm so excited for this day!" says Rebecca Richards as she giddily walks to the front door of H2O Salon and Spa. Rebecca is excited because she is the lucky participant of Families in Transition to be chosen for the 3rd annual Applaud Makeover.

Families in Transition, FIT, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency with locations in Manchester and Concord, New Hampshire, that provides safe and affordable housing to individuals with or without children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Rebecca is a single mom with five children: Felicia, 14; James, 12; Jacklyn, 8; Julie, 5; and Kaylee, 1. After she had Kaylee while living at her mother's house, she applied to FIT and has been a participant since May. Now that she has a permanent apartment, she is grateful that FIT has given her a beautiful home to call her own. "For the first time, my name is on the lease!" says Rebecca. "FIT has also given me back independence, responsibility and trust.

Walking into the salon, which has a smooth beat playing overhead, Rebecca cannot wait to show off her soon-to-be hair color to Shasta Winn. "Since she started the program, she's been working hard at accomplishing her goals—which is why she deserves this day," says Shasta.

Heather Owen, the owner and art director of H2O; Melissa Asselin, Heather's assistant; and Lisa LeVierge, the head esthetician at H2O, are all here on their day off to make this event possible. They postpone business; let the phones ring—all their attention is given to Rebecca.

Opulent in nature—from the tiled floors to the bold shapes and colors—H2O has a classic style with a modern, urban flare. It also acts like one of the high-end salons on Newbury Street by providing its staff with an ongoing education through a strong in-house training program that ensures every stylist is proficient in various techniques. "It takes a lot of training to be able to determine what people need according to their individual looks," says Melissa.

With advanced training under their belts, these ladies are able to give Rebecca the dramatic look she wants. "I want fun, feisty and sexy—something that pops!" says Rebecca, as she's given a black robe to put over her clothes.

Rebecca is first brought over to H2O's unique color bar—a curvy white table surrounded by five chairs—which enables women to gather socially in comfort as they get their hair dyed and even to enjoy some wine. This is where Heather gives Rebecca a foil treatment for corrective color since Rebecca has damaged her hair by incorrectly dyeing it in the past. The foil treatment will ensure

that the color applied today will not be compromised.

After the last foil is placed, Lisa walks Rebecca through a space with soft lighting and accent chairs and into the pedicure room. As Rebecca gets her back kneaded by the Whale Spa massage chair she sits on, Lisa gives her a mini-pedicure that includes soaking her feet, removing polish, filing, clipping, buffing, and applying a new coat of red nail polish—O•P•I “Keys to my Karma”—that Rebecca chose.

When her toes are safely secured in pedicure flip-flops, Rebecca is brought back to the color bar where Heather adds color gloss to the ends of her hair for shine. With Rebecca’s toes tingling and hair shining, Heather repeats her pillar mantra, “Healthy hair is pretty hair.”

Rebecca is still smiling eight minutes later when her hair is done under the dryer. She cannot even remember the last time she has been to a salon or spa. “It’s been at least 10 years,” she says. “It’s been over a year since I’ve even had a trim.”

Before Heather stains Rebecca’s hair to create the red highlights she wants, the foils get taken off and she receives a hair rinse by Melissa, along with a signature H2O scalp massage. “This makes me feel perfect,” says Rebecca.

Making Rebecca even more relaxed—as well as making her skin a clean palate before her makeup application—she is brought to a room of burnt orange and yellow where she receives a mini-facial from Lisa.

As Celtic music plays over the sound of a fountain in the corner, a plush blanket is draped over Rebecca while she lies on a soft bed. With the smell of relaxing oils and products in the room, Lisa gently works her hands over Rebecca’s face as if she is giving a massage, making this experience Rebecca’s favorite part of the day. “I feel like I’m in another world here,” says Rebecca. “I feel total relaxation—almost meditative.”

Euphorically, Rebecca floats out of the room to then get her hair washed and to receive another scalp massage before Heather and Melissa prep her for a dry cut, which Heather says will give a more precise cut with Rebecca’s hair type. After her hair is straightened and gets applied with Bumble and Bumble shine spray, the scissors come out.

Heather’s unique layering technique lets her create shorter layers that seamlessly blend with the longer layers while adding bounce and movement to Rebecca’s hair. Heather maneuvers the scissors hypnotically as if they are her own fingers in a lyrical dance—moving rapidly, yet with incredible grace. When the cutting is done, Rebecca cannot help but to whip her hair side to side saying, “Wow! This is great! I finally have hair that pops!”

Radiant hair accomplished, Rebecca is brought to the makeup bar. Here, Lisa uses H2O’s own makeup line—which is made of 100% pure minerals, gives sun protection and contains no preservatives or chemical

dyes—on Rebecca. Women should never overlook that a change in hair color creates a change in their color palate. H2O offers a complimentary makeup touch-up for anyone who receives a new hair color. The client simply has to ask for it as she sets up her appointment.

From almond foundation to raspberry eye shadow, all the makeup is in powder form and makes Rebecca barely feel anything on her face. Once she looks in the mirror though, she gasps and gleefully says, “I look like a different woman!”

With H2O’s work complete, Rebecca goes in a back room to change into her new outfit provided by FIT’s thrift store. All the profits of this store are used to support ongoing programs and services of the agency. There is one located on Second Street and there will also be one on South Beech Street in Manchester.

As everyone waits in anticipation Rebecca suddenly comes out beaming! She struts over to everyone in her new boots, thanking them for giving her more self-confidence and making her feel like a brand new person. “This is her final change,” says Shasta. “This completes her transformation.”

With her new look and attitude, Rebecca plans on going back to college to become a certified health claims specialist. For today though, she is excited to show off her new look to the women at FIT, especially her best friend who is also a participant. “Families in Transition is a great, great program,” says Rebecca. “I’m lucky to be a part of it and very happy I could be a part of today.” Rebecca heartfully thanked Susan Caldwell of Applaud, members of FIT and the staff at H2O.

H2O Salon/Spa is located in Bedford Grove Center at 7 Colby Court in Bedford, NH. For information please call (603) 641-3050 or visit www.h2osalonspa.com. Families in Transition can always use help . For further information, please call (603) 641-9441. ▲

THE RESULTS

