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One lock at a time: Shelburne woman donates hair for kids? wigs

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Contemplating making a big hair change? Maybe think about putting the loose locks forward for donation.

Shelburne resident Monica Barrett cut off more than 12 inches of her hair on Monday (Oct. 16) to donate to help make wigs for children.

Speaking with the Free Press, Barrett said she was inspired to cut her after hearing a radio advertisement discussing children with wigs. Over the last year, she's been growing her hair out to prepare for the big cut and donate.

?I want these kids to have a way of life and to know that anything is possible; that it doesn't need to stop them living their life,? said Barrett. ?It means to world to be able to give what I have.?

Nelly Ponte, owner of Vivid Hair Salon, who cut Monica's hair for the donation, spoke about the effect that hair can have on a person.

?Hair can be everything for an adult, never mind a child. It's a reflection of who they are and people can actually find themselves with a specific haircut.?

When it comes to making wigs from human hair, it can be difficult to find sources with specifics in length, requiring a minimum of 12 inches and a preference for natural, non-coloured hair.

?A lot of people have reactions to synthetic hair such as allergies, irritations and rashes. So, when you have real hair, you're less likely to get that, and there's also more options for styling,? explained Ponte.

While looking to help children facing illnesses such as alopecia and cancer, Barrett herself has been experiencing health concerns for the last decade.

In 2013, Barrett was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, also known as MS, a chronic disease that affects the central nervous system. Initially, she experienced relapsing-remitting MS, where she experienced relapses with symptoms worsening followed by recovery. In the past few years, Barrett has gone from using a walker for assistance to using a wheelchair to move about her daily life.

Barrett said she hopes that by sharing her own experience with making the big chop to donate her hair will inspire others in the community to do the same.

?I have hair and I can grow hair, there are people out there that are not as fortunate to be able to grow and have their own hair. I want to do my best to donate what I can for others,? said Barrett. ?I hope that people will find it in their hearts that it's not just them, you're not alone and you have others out there to help.?