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News

Women With HIV/AIDS Enjoy a Perfect Day of Pampering at the Boston Living Center

About 50 ladies received free services and caught up with old friends at the South End center's annual Day of Beauty.

By [Cate Lecuyer](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 18, 2012

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Tracy Hayes went shopping Thursday afternoon at the Boston Living Center. And she didn't even spend any money.

She also got a free massage, had her makeup done, made a dream catcher, and was one of about 50 women who got a chance to relax and rejuvenate as part of the center's annual Day of Beauty.

A South End community resource center for people with HIV/AIDS, the Boston Living Center worked with volunteers to offer everything from a clothing drive and hair and makeup services, to arts and crafts, acupuncture, Reiki, a smoothie station, gift bags, raffle prizes and delicious food.

With males making up about 75 percent of the center's membership (a statistic that is not representative of the virus itself), the event is a great way to draw in more of the female population, said Member Service Manager Carmen Rios.

"This is an opportunity to bring in the women, and reintroduce them to the center," she said.

But it's also a whole lot more.

"You get to see all the ladies you haven't seen in a while, because everyone's life is so busy," Hayes said. "It's a great time. It's bringing together a sisterhood."

While she may see some of the same people throughout the year - at events like the Aids Walk or the Boston Living Center's annual Thanksgiving dinner, for instance - there's no chance to really talk or bond, she said. But spending the day away from job and family responsibilities, and getting pampered provides time to truly catch up with old friends, and make new ones.

"It's like teach one, teach one," Hayes said, as she welcomed a new member with a hug. Hayes remembers receiving similar treatment when she joined, and makes it a point to offer others the same support.

The Day of Beauty stems from the idea that women are so busy taking care of others, that they deserve at least one day a year that's all about them.

"It's kind of reminds the ladies," Rios said, "that we're here for them."

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