

## SHERRY BROOKS, CERTIFIED CRANIAL PROSTHESIS FITTER AT SECOND TO NATURE WOMEN'S BOUTIQUE.

Graduation from Kenneth Shuler Schools of Cosmetology in June 2007 led Sherry Brooks to help boost cancer patients' confidence through cosmetology.



*Brooks works as a certified cranial prosthesis fitter at Second to Nature Women's Boutique in Augusta, Ga.*

It wasn't until she was 46 that Sherry Brooks decided to become a cosmetologist. Until that time, she and her husband served as full-time ministers, even establishing an orphanage in Jinotega, Nicaragua. After her husband's retirement, however, Brooks was looking for another career path—one that would not only fill her time, but also fulfill her need to help others. She decided the cosmetology industry was the perfect fit and headed to Kenneth Shuler Schools of Cosmetology's North Augusta Campus to make her dream come true.

### Getting (Back) in the Game

Returning to school later in life can be a challenge. Although it was difficult to get back into the swing of studying and passing tests again, Brooks said the program's incorporation of hands-on learning was well-suited for her.

However, Brooks did notice some differences between her and younger students.

"I was settled and had less needs than others just starting out," she said. "I think it could be a plus for educators because we come with less (or no) drama. I wasn't there to play, but I did have fun!"

However, Brooks said, age doesn't make that big of a difference in the classroom. "Students are students, and we were all there for the same thing," she said.

When asked how she felt in class with younger students she responded, "Well, older, but I think it was an inspiration to most: 'If this old lady can do it, so can I!' And that was fine for me, and for the most part I enjoyed it because they kept me young."

### Finding Her Calling

After graduating in June 2007, Brooks worked at several hair salons and spas. It wasn't until more than a year later, however, that she found her true passion working with cancer patients at University Hospital in Augusta, Ga.

Brooks now works as a certified cranial prosthesis fitter at Second to Nature Women's Boutique. As cancer patients begin to lose their hair from the harsh, demanding treatments, they come to visit Brooks, who helps them pick out wigs. She also shaves the patient's head, fits the wig to their head and styles the wig. In addition, Brooks shows patients how to take care of their dry, delicate skin as they endure countless rounds of chemotherapy and radiation.

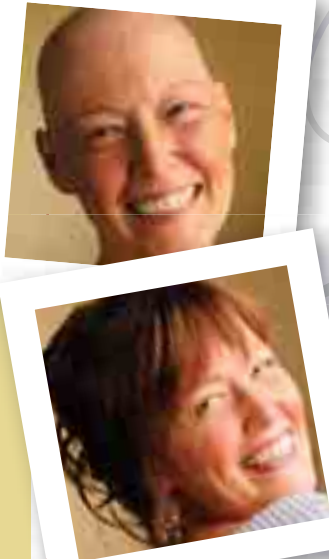
It may be the hospital staff's job to make cancer patients feel better, but Brooks says it's her job to make them look better. For her, the work is the perfect combination of her two loves—ministering and cosmetology.

### Additional Efforts

Brooks also works once a month with the Personal Care Products Council Foundation, the American Cancer Society and the National Cosmetology Association on Look Good...Feel Better®, a national public service program created to help individuals with cancer cope with the appearance-related side effects of the disease. Individuals diagnosed with cancer and undergoing radiation can attend the non-medical cancer support program, which includes free patient education, program materials and cosmetic kits. "During two-hour workshops I demonstrate make-up, wigs, scarves, hats, skin and nail care, and believe me, I get more out of it than them," Brooks said.

Any licensed cosmetologist willing to donate one afternoon a month of their time can participate in the program. For more information, visit [www.lookgood-feelbetter.org](http://www.lookgood-feelbetter.org).

Brooks, like many others, said she had no idea that a cosmetology license could open up this and numerous other career paths. She said she hopes that other cosmetologists will also become inspired to use their talents to make a difference.



*Before and after portraits of a Look Good...Feel Better participant. Brooks works once a month to help individuals with cancer cope with the appearance-related side effects of the disease. Photos courtesy of Look Good...Feel Better. Photography by Chris Usher.*



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