

Local hair stylist's donation plan a WIN for Concord-Carlisle Community Chest

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As a long-time hair stylist in Concord, Chris Blais relies on tips from her clients to pay her bills and put food on her table.

But after hearing a simple conversation about the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, a fundraising organization since 1947 that helps Concord and Carlisle residents, she decided those tips would be better off helping others.

Blais is donating all of her tips over a 30-day period (which began Oct. 10) to the CCCC.

“It honestly brought tears to my eyes,” said Liza Carey, the co-president of the CCCC, after hearing of the tips donation plan. “The fact that somebody can be that generous in a community they don’t live in and is that touched by what the Community Chest does just by hearing a simple story is really impactful.”

So what's the story?

Kate Skelly, a board member and chair of the program committee for the Community Chest, was out getting her hair done on Oct. 9 with a friend at Monument Style in Concord after having a meeting on fundraising plans for CCCC. The discussion turned to how to fundraise and rebuild the WIN fund (When in Need).

“She always wants to know what’s going on with the Chest and how to help,” Skelly said of her friend, Deb. “I said I just came from a WIN fund meeting and the fund is actually running low.”

The WIN fund provides one-time, emergency funding for individuals or families in crisis.

Deb wrote a check then and there before discussing CCCC with Blais. Blais then wrote a check for \$100. But she wasn’t done donating. After deciding on her 30-day tips plan, she went a step further.

“She sent it out to 20 clients,” Skelly said, “to ones she felt comfortable with. (And she also said) on Halloween day she’s going to donate all her purses to the chest.”

Blais said she’s received some “generous” tips from her clients since sharing her donation plan.

“I love all my clients, they’ve been good to me,” she said. “For the first time in my life I feel I can give something back.”

Blais has set up a chest in the salon where anyone can donate cash or checks for CCCC. Credit card donations are also accepted.

After sharing her plan with her clients, she said the donations started coming in quickly, and at a higher percentage than normal.

“The first couple clients gave double, up to 40 percent or more,” she said. “It was amazing.”

And it’s all because of a simple conversation between two friends.

“To me it underscores getting the word out because once somebody hears what the Chest does, and the organizations it supports, it’s kind of hard to not want to support it,” Skelly said. “But so many people don’t know about it, which is why we’re trying to find out how do we get the word out. Everybody wants to support Concord. It’s an amazing community (along with Carlisle). There is an absolute unmet need and we’re trying to fulfill that the best we can.”

Blais said she’s happy to help a community that has embraced her for the past two decades.

“I’ve been looking into volunteer work,” she said. “This is just the start for me to give a little something back.”

To donate to CCCC, visit <https://www.cccommunitychest.org/>.