

## In Redlands, hair is cut or shaved for a good cause

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By **DIANE A. RHODES**  
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Mike Cook was one of the first to have his head shaved during the recent 5th annual Hair Cut-a-Thon to benefit the Childhood **Cancer** Foundation of Southern California.

"I'm not a bald-headed person," said the Fort Irwin firefighter who was instrumental in starting the event in 2006. "These kids with cancer don't have a choice to go bald."

Cook, who lives in the High Desert, heard about a similar event held by a friend whose child had cancer several years ago. It inspired him to organize one and he approached the nonprofit organization with the idea.

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Cancer survivor Paris Alvino, left, cuts the hair of Cori Garcia at The Rose of Sharon Salon in Redlands. The hair was donated to the Wigs for Kids program during Sunday's 5th annual Hair Cut-a-Thon to benefit the Childhood Cancer Foundation of Southern California.

For a minimum \$20 donation about 75 men, women and children had their hair cut during the six-hour event at The Rose of Sharon Salon in Redlands. Thirty more opted to have their heads shaved. Most of them were firefighters encouraged by Cook. Station crews also hosted a barbecue for the first time.

Inside the salon Paris Alvino worked shears through Cori Garcia's hair, right above a rubber band that held her long, thick ponytail in place. Paris, 7, is a cancer survivor and Cori was one of 25 who donated at least 12 inches of hair for Wigs for Kids, an organization that provides wigs for children with cancer.

Cindy Mooney has been growing her hair for about 11 years and celebrated her 53rd birthday by having it cut to shoulder length. Stylist Jessica Stenberg said the 24-inch braid was the longest donation of the day.

Victoria Garcia, 8, Yanhely Hernandez, 10, and Nicholas Trejo, 13 -- also cancer survivors -- stayed busy shampooing and cutting hair with the help of salon stylists who donated their time and tips to the event.

Yanhely's mom Gloria Hernandez said this was the girl's first year of participation. Yanhely was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) in March 2008 and finished treatments about seven months later.

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Jason Dressel, left, and Mike Cook were among the firefighters who shaved their heads and hosted a barbecue to support Sunday's 5th annual Hair Cut-a-Thon in Redlands.

"She loves helping other people," said Hernandez, of Coachella.

Owners of the salon are Marty Alvino and her son, Miguel Alvino. They were delighted to be chosen by the foundation to hold the annual fundraiser. Before the second year's event, Miguel Alvino's daughter Paris was diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma. Soon they were working with the foundation on a different level.

When Paris didn't have hair Miguel kept his head shaved. The little girl said she wanted her hair to grow back pink because that is her favorite color.

"People heard about her and came in to get pink strands put in their hair," said Miguel, 30. "The Catholic school even lifted the dress code so students could wear pink in their hair. This community has been amazing."

The Childhood Cancer Foundation of Southern California is a nonprofit organization that supports families through every stage of a child's cancer journey.

This year's event raised about \$4,000.

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