

# Chesapeake salon's hair headed to Gulf oil spill

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By Christy Barritt  
Correspondent

GREENBRIER

Hair today, oil-absorbing sponge tomorrow.

One local spa and salon is showing citizens who live hundreds of miles away from Louisiana's coast can help with the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Natural Elements Spa and Salon, 717 Eden Way in Greenbrier, is doing its part in the fight to protect the shorelines from spilled oil. All the ladies have to do is collect hair clippings.

Co-owners Suzanne Garcia and Audrey Brown are participating in this recycling project through an organization called Matter of Trust, which takes hair clippings and makes oil spill hair mats and oil spill hair booms.

The mats and booms are woven from recycled panty house and hair clippings and then used to soak up petroleum oil spills on beaches and waterways. The booms and mats are washable and reusable.

They felt the organization was a perfect fit for their business, which they try to keep environmentally friendly.

"Matter of Trust will take any hair that can be put into these booms, which can float in certain areas or lay along the sand line and get the oil that way," said Garcia, 33. "It's unbelievably amazing. In an hour, one of those booms can absorb 100 gallons of oil."

Garcia said it's an easy way to make a big difference. All they do is sweep up the hair at their salon, put it in a box and mail it off.

"Otherwise, you're just throwing the hair away," said Garcia. "You mail it off and (Matter of Trust) does the rest. It's a great thing to do all the way around. It makes me feel even better, knowing, unfortunately, what's going on in the Gulf."



The salon is not only collecting hair clippings from services performed on their customers, but the public is also free to bring clippings in for donation. Matter of Trust collects both human hair and fur from pets.

"The more we make regular citizens aware of this organization, the better," said Garcia, a Grassfield resident. "You feel like you're at least participating in the collective focus to help Mother Earth. I think it's important more people realize the little steps they take, the easier everything is for everybody. All it costs is some postage. It's well worth it."

Brown's 9-year-old daughter has even taken an interest in the oil spill. For her science fair project, she created an oil boom out of panty hose and hair.

"It made her want to watch the news more and see what's happening with the oil spill," said Brown, a massage therapist and Navy veteran. "She's an animal fanatic, so keeping animals protected is huge for her."

According to Garcia, a hair salon will cut an average of one pound of hair per day. Garcia and Brown both hope that more salons and individuals will participate in this project.

"We'd just like to encourage everyone to do it," said Brown, 43 and a Great Bridge resident. "That's the main thing. We're very excited about it because it's so simple. Our lives are extremely busy and hectic. We have families and work. When something simple comes along, it gets us excited. We'd just really like for anyone who's not doing it, to do it. It's easy."

For more information on Natural Elements, visit their website at: [www.natural-elementsspa.com](http://www.natural-elementsspa.com) or call them at 436-1141.

The salon isn't the only one collecting hair. The local Chesapeake Hair Club is also sending in hair, according to Patsi Butler, the center manager. The center is located at 3132 Lynnhurst Blvd.

For more information on Matter of Trust, visit their website at: [www.matteroftrust.org](http://www.matteroftrust.org).

*Christy Barritt, 651-6166 [christybarritt@cox.net](mailto:christybarritt@cox.net)*