

A day of beauty and relaxation for deserving moms

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Catherine Johns delivers a "Relax and Renew from the Inside Out" massage during an event May 18 for mothers of Chai Lifeline Midwest (Jeff Krage/for Pioneer Press)



Mothers of Chai Lifeline Midwest wait for treatments at Teddie Kossof Salon, Spa and Wellness Center. (Jeff Krage/for Pioneer Press)



Jill Franks of Highland Park gets a hair treatment May 18 from Teddie Kossof Salon's Tara Jenkins during an event for mothers of Chai Lifeline Midwest. The international organization provides emotional and social support to the families of children with life-threatening illnesses or serious chronic and genetic conditions. (Jeff Krage/for Pioneer Press)

Parenting, as many moms and dads know, is a never-ending job.

But for some parents -- especially those with seriously ill children -- it truly means constant caregiving.

And for a couple of hours on the afternoon of May 18, some moms got extra TLC for themselves.

Northfield's Teddie Kossof Salon, Spa and Wellness Center teamed up with Dr. Tal Raine, president and medical director of Refine 360 LLC Luxury Laser Boutiques, and Brenda Bendel Limited Skin Care Salon and Make-Up Studio to provide a day of wellness and beauty to mothers affiliated with Chai Lifeline Midwest.

Chai Lifeline is an international organization that provides emotional and social support to the families of children with life-threatening illnesses or serious chronic and genetic conditions.

About 30 moms, coming as far north as Milwaukee, participated in the event. They had their choice of free services, including hair styling, mini massages, make-up applications, manicures and pedicures, and relaxing mini face-lifts and more.

The post-Mothers' Day event was designed to refresh the minds, spirits, and bodies for the mothers, generally the primary caregivers for their ill child, said Leslie Finkel, Chai Lifeline's special events coordinator.

"A lot of the women got really emotional," she said. "A lot of them just don't have time for themselves."

Teddie Kossof said his salon has participated in the event for two years. And he's happy to help.

"It's amazing how these few hours make such a huge difference" for mothers whose constant focus is on their sick children, he said.

"A simple thing like a 20-minute chair massage can turn things around for almost anybody," Kossof said.

Jill Franks of Highland Park was one of the mothers able to get to the event. Her 8-year-old son Jordan has a chronic and life-threatening metabolic disorder.

Being that the event was scheduled over a weekend, Franks said her husband was able to stay home and take care of their two sons. Her other son, Ryan, is 11.

"There's nothing like a shampoo and a head massage," gushed Franks about her haircut at the salon.

Chai Lifeline feels like an extended family, Franks said. Over and over, they've served as an important helping hand, she said.

Jordan was hospitalized nine times in his first 18 months of life. The organization provided cooked meals for the family during that time. And on a consistent basis, the organization creates events for the full family to enjoy. Birthday cards are sent to all children in the family, not just those who are ill.

"You can go and be yourself," she said of outings with other Chai Lifeline families. "Unless people are walking in similar shoes, people are not going to understand."