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Tampa Hairstylists Collect Hair To Absorb Gulf Oil Spill

Two Tampa hairstylists think they are part of the solution in responding to the April 20 explosion on a BP offshore drilling rig that has severely threatened marine life in the Gulf of Mexico and along the shorelines of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

Send in the hair, say Michael Angelo Rizzi and Anthony Bellapigna, owners of Michael Angelo Hair Color Studio in South Tampa.

As a member of Matter of Trust, an organization that “links ideas, sparks action and materializes sustainable systems,” the studio is collecting hair clippings to be used for hair mats and booms that will help to soak up oil and thus clean up oil-contaminated waters.

The absorbing power of hair on oil spills isn't a new concept. The idea was hatched by Phil McCrory, a hairstylist from Alabama who noticed how the fur on Alaskan otters was completely soaked with oil following the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. Utilizing hair clippings from his salon, McCrory began testing how much oil he could collect and soon invented the hairmat. The organization Matter of Trust stepped in and began collecting hair clippings, sorting them and shipping the fibers off to have batches of hairmats created for oil spill relief. The organization even makes hair booms from loose hair stuffed into nylon stockings. Also, once the hairmats and hair booms are finished doing their job on oil spills, the hair is used as fertilizer.

“We are really very passionate about protecting and saving our environment, while rallying others to join this cause. It doesn't really cost anything extra for salon clients or professional hair designers to donate their hair clippings to this extremely worthy cause created by Matter Of Trust,” says Rizzi.

The team at Michael Angelo Hair Studio is encouraging other salons in the Tampa Bay region to join them.

“We believe in and completely support this important green alternative for ecosystem recovery. Our ultimate goal is to help quickly spread the word, so other Tampa area salons will take part. We believe that you and your readers can help us spread the word to let everyone know that helping out is as easy as getting a haircut,” says Rizzi.

Salons in the Tampa Bay region and Southern Florida that are interested in getting involved may contact Michael Angelo Hair Studio at 813-832-6650 or e-mail info@MichaelAngeloHairStudio.com.

