



WHAT'S WORKING

A Message From DJJ Director Andy Block

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Guidance With Style

Lora Taylor's Biggest Success Came When She Became A Cosmetology Instructor With DJJ

Lora Taylor earned a master's degree at Cambridge College in Massachusetts where she became a licensed school guidance counselor. But three years into the work in a public school setting, Taylor said she was frustrated.

"There wasn't enough time for the students," Taylor says. "I was so busy doing paperwork and attending meetings that I wasn't helping the kids the way I really wanted to."

She started wondering if her lifelong passion for teaching cosmetology—the cosmetic treatment of skin, hair and nails—could be another way to provide vocational guidance to kids through the hands-on application of the skill in a classroom. She tried teaching cosmetology at several public and private schools, where she taught some juvenile offenders along the way.

Armed with this experience, she applied for a position at Bon Air JCC in 2009. Since that time, Taylor has combined her passion for helping young offenders with her love of cosmetology to train more than 60 students, nine of whom have become licensed cosmetologists and have gone on to successful careers.

It's not just cutting hair and doing nails in Ms. Taylor's class. Students learn all the details necessary to become a licensed cosmetologist: how to keep water out of a customer's eyes during a shampoo, properly applying a smock, blow-drying techniques, how to put a towel around the neck—even how to ask customers if they are allergic to certain skin



Cosmetology instructor Lora Taylor has taught at Bon Air JCC since 2009. Nine of her students have become licensed cosmetologists.

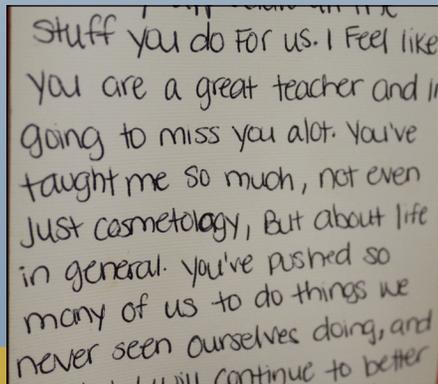
products or have high blood pressure.

And it's not just girls in the class, although Taylor says it started out that way. "About two years after the program started, the boys started to say, 'Hey, that's not fair that only the girls can take it.' So we started training boys in 2011. Now we have more boys learning cosmetology than girls."

The interest comes naturally to "Peter," who is brushing the shaggy mane of a male mannequin head. "Barbering has been in my family. My father is a barber, and I want to work with my uncle in his barbershop."

The impact Taylor has had on her students is evident on a bulletin board in her classroom that is covered with grateful letters from students thanking her for changing their attitude -- and in some cases, their lives. Taylor becomes misty-eyed as she re-reads some of them.

"I'm very passionate about these kids," she says. "To see where they come from -- so many come here with nothing. To see them work so hard and be successful: That's what keeps me here."



Left: Teaching a Bon Air resident how to put on a smock. Right: A letter from a grateful student.