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### A GIFT OF HAIR FOR A LITTLE GIRL

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In a perfect world, little girls like Nicole Ship don't lose their hair.

But in real life, little girls like Nicole, 3, do go bald.  
For some, it's a temporary side effect brought on by chemotherapy treatments to kill cancer.

For others, like Nicole, hair loss is permanent.

`` I have alopecia," Nicole said, quite loudly, when prompted by her mother, Amy Ship, who explained that alopecia is an autoimmune disease.

`` It means her hair's going away," said Nicole's sister, Hannah, 4.

Nicole wears a hat to cover the bald spots on her head.

`` I'm mad at my hair because it doesn't get big," Nicole said.

At least one organization - Florida-based Locks of Love - is so moved by kids like Nicole and others with hair loss that it collects hair, which is then weaved into wigs for girls who are at least 6 years old.

Even though Nicole must wait three years before she can get a wig, one of her friends, Julia Rubinstein, 10, had her hair cut on a recent Friday in Nicole's honor.

Julia sat in a chair at **Lollilocks Kids Salon** and watched without emotion as a stylist braided and then cut a 10-inch handful of her raven hair.

`` I knew it was for a worthy cause, so I didn't mind," Julia said.

Julia and Nicole have been friends forever. Julia baby-sits Nicole. They play games. They put puzzles together.

`` Nicole will wave to you," Amy said. `` But she'll cry for Julia when Julia leaves."

Girls and young adults must donate at least 10 inches of healthy hair - no gray or bleach. It takes hair from about 10 people to make a wig, which costs about \$3,500 and is sold on a sliding scale.

Lollilocks cuts and styles donors' hair for free.

As Julia was getting her hair cut, another stylist had just finished cutting the hair of another Locks of Love donor, Joelle Alva, 10, of Parker.

Joelle's dark hair flowed to her waist. It was neck-length when the stylist finished.

Joelle and Nicole had never met. But when Amy heard of Joelle's generosity, she told Nicole.

Nicole hugged Joelle around the waist.

“Thank you for the hair,” she said.