

**SMALL BUSINESSES:
Moving on with a malady
Bipolar disorder doesn't deter stylist**

By LESLIE EVERTON BRICE
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Denise Broadway is a veteran hairstylist, published poet and budding author.

She's also struggled for years with bipolar disorder, a mental health malady that routinely precludes work for many people who have the disease.



Renee Brock/Special

Denise Broadway takes care of Ernestina Osei's hair at Hair Designs by Broadway, opened with the help of a local grant.

Yet Broadway is not only working in her chosen profession, she's the business owner.

Hair Designs by Broadway opened in Austell in May.

Broadway says she owes much of her success to the network of support she received from a joint grant from the Cobb & Douglas County Community Services Board, an agency that helps people with developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse problems, and **Cobb Works**, a work force development agency. The collaboration of many other groups also was instrumental in the opening of the salon.

"I went to the Cobb County health clinic and went through the day treatment program for the bipolar," said Broadway. "And in the final step, I started looking at ways to go to work or to school."

Since she had many years of experience in hairstyling, that seemed the natural way to go.

This time, she'd be her own boss.

"We realized that being a wage employee working for someone else was not the best thing for her," said Brian Palumbo, an employment specialist with Cobb Community Services.

"Her dream was to open her own salon."

The agency had been awarded a grant that was created to help clients pursue self-employment goals a perfect match for Broadway's dream.

"The thing about this grant is that it's given people who are traditionally told they couldn't work, the opportunity not only to work, but to pursue self-employment," said Palumbo. "It's been wonderful for me to sit and watch and see it happen."

Before Broadway took on her new salon, she enrolled in Kennesaw State University's Edge Connection, a 12-week course that helped her develop business skills and taught her to write a business plan.

**HAIR DESIGNS BY
BROADWAY**

Where: 5900 Maxham

Road, Suite 7, Austell

Phone: 770-745-4205

Hours: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

Tuesdays-Fridays; 8

a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays;

Sunday and Monday by

appointment only

Supported by partnerships with the various agencies and services, Broadway also attended school to update and sharpen her hairstyling skills.

The shop includes Broadway and one other stylist and she's actively recruiting more stylists. The salon offers all kinds of services for ethnic and black hair, Broadway said.

"We do relaxers, perms, shampoo and set, press and curl," she said. "My favorite things to do are weaves and extensions.

"I'm so blessed," Broadway said. "By giving me the grant, they helped me decide what to do with my life. And they helped me to realize I could do it."

She also gives lots of credit to her family and her church Word of Faith for supporting her.

Now, Broadway is writing a book about her life and experiences. The working title is "Learning to Live with Life's Limitations."

"I want to help other people with mental health problems," she said. "They don't need to be ashamed. Even though they may have disabilities, that doesn't have to stop them."

For more information on the Cobb and Douglas Community Services Boards, call 770-422-0202.