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Finding a little inspiration

Gulf Breeze woman's creations help cancer patients with hair loss



Kate Peabody
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Shortly after she was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 33, Angela Lemke learned she'd lose her hair during chemotherapy.

To prepare, she chopped off most of her long, blond locks.

Next, she began looking for a comfortable headpiece.

"I looked at wigs and wore a bandana a few times, but nothing seemed to fit," the 34-year-old mom said.

Frustrated by the limited choices, Lemke, a finalist in the recent Portofino's Ports of Call makeover contest, took action.

She decided to create a designer ponytail hat. Not just for her, but for other women who were going through the same ordeal.

But now, through her online retail company, Inspired By You, the Gulf Breeze woman creates and sells custom-designed ponytail hats as an alternative to other traditional headwear, such as wigs.

Her wish is to make women feel a little less self-conscious during a difficult and emotionally challenging time -- to give them a little confidence, she said.

"People don't understand how much a woman identifies with the way she looks," Lemke said. "When you are bald -- you are bald. People look at you strangely."

Treasa Johnson, 36, and a two-time cancer survivor, knows how hard it is to cope with losing your hair. She was the first person to model one of Lemke's ponytail designer hats.

The two met when Johnson was receiving chemotherapy treatments at the Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola.

"Some people get tired wearing a wig, especially in the summertime when it is very hot," said Johnson, a Robertsdale, Ala., cosmetologist. "With this hat, all you have to do is stick it on and go — and nobody will know the difference.



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Angela Lemke, a cancer survivor, works from her south Santa Rosa County home to create and distribute her hats with hair for cancer patients. Lemke became frustrated when searching for a headpiece and decided to make her own. She now owns Inspired By You, which offers custom-designed hats with ponytails attached.

Bruce Graner

Her company

Angela Lemke's online company, Inspired By You, offers custom-designed hats with ponytails attached for women who are bald.

Hat choices: Red, purple or pink. She offers more than 200 combinations of hat designs.

Ponytail choices: Various colors with layered, straight, wavy or braided hair. You can pick a 12- or 15-inch ponytail.

Details: 932-7707 or (866) 340-7707. Or visit [www.inspiredbyyou.org](#).

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Lemke's hats come in different colors and the hair in different colors, textures and lengths.

She has hats for children, too.

Don't have online access? Lemke has an Inspired By You brochure with designs galore you can select from -- just call and you can receive one in the mail.

She's taken her efforts one step further by supporting causes such as the American Cancer Society and St. Jude Research Children's Hospital to promote cancer research.

Said Johnson of Lemke's creations: "It's something different that gives women a better outlook at a bad time in their lives. I know it did for me."