

Mom, daughter donate their hair for cancer



JIM WILKES/TORONTO STAR

Oceanlili Morgan, 7, with the first haircut of her young life, her Dad Peter and her mother Dianne show off their hair that was shorn to help make wigs for child patients at Credit Valley Hospital's cancer centre. Between them is Oceanlili's fireplug piggybank, emptied of \$100 plus for the cause.

Duo gets bold new look so tresses can be used in cancer-patient wigs

October 06, 2008

JIM WILKES
STAFF REPORTER

What makes a little girl give up a lifetime of hair and all the money she's saved? For 7-year-old Oceanlili Morgan of Mississauga, the answer is simple.

"I want to share with kids like me who have cancer," the petite brunette said yesterday after her long locks were shorn and her piggy bank raided for the more than \$1,100 in nickels, dimes and quarters inside.

Her hair is headed to Pantene Beautiful Lengths, an organization that makes wigs for children who have cancer or had treatment for it and lost their hair along the way. Her coins are bound for the \$300 million regional cancer centre at Mississauga's Credit Valley Hospital, which recently broke ground on a \$230 million addition.

"I like to give," the Grade 2 student said as a collection of relatives, friends and other adults gathered on the patio at Canyon Creek Chophouse near Square One. "I feel sad for kids who don't have hair any more. I'm lucky. My hair is going to grow back."

Dianne Morgan said her daughter first said she wanted to donate her hair when she was 4 after she watched a TV program about kids with cancer. "Three years later she still wants to do it," Morgan said. "It's amazing because it's also her first haircut."

"As for what would inspire a 7-year-old to donate, I really think it's innate in all of us. My daughter gives away her toys to other kids and she gives away my stuff, too. "I think we all have this natural desire to give and help and share."

It takes the tresses from a dozen donors to make a single wig, so Oceanlili's mother decided to submit to the scissors, too. Friends and family members donated the cash to clip off one of the several long braids into which her hair had been fashioned.

Oceanlili didn't blink as her two grandfathers, her grandmother and father chopped off her hair in four sections.

Mom bit her lip as braid after braid disappeared, then shed a few tears as stylist Manny from Brampton's House of Mann shaved off the rest and left her skull a beautiful, but empty place. "I'm happy, really," she said. "There's going to be new life in my old, dead hair."

Husband Peter watched with a smile as the ladies in his life took on startling new looks.

"They both look good," he said. "I'm very proud of Oceanlili. She's a fun-loving, caring little girl and I hope that's how she'll always stay. It makes you think that you're doing things right as a parent."

Tina Triano, vice-president of the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation, agreed that most donations to its cancer centre are much bigger than Oceanlili's. But any meaningful gift "is a major gift to the person who's giving it," she said. "Every single gift adds up and makes a huge difference to the patients at the hospital."

For her part, Oceanlili sat off to the side stroking her new, shorter do. "I'll miss my hair a little," she said. "But I won't have to brush it so much."