



Students in the UW-River Falls Sales Promotions and Event Planning class recently raised \$2,500 for a nonprofit organization that purchases wigs for cancer patients who lose their hair because of cancer treatments. UWRF photo.

Students raise money for wigs for cancer patients

Thrift sale, silent auction raises \$2,500 for nonprofit EBeauty Community

Dec. 21, 2023 - University of Wisconsin-River Falls Marketing Communications program students turned a holiday fundraiser into free wigs for people experiencing medical hair loss.

Students in the Sales Promotions and Event Planning class hosted the third annual Gift and Thrift on Dec. 7. The holiday-themed event, which included a thrift sale, make-and-take crafts and a silent auction, raised \$2,500 for EBeauty Community, an Arizona-based nonprofit organization that provides free wigs to individuals undergoing cancer treatments.

Approximately 350 people attended the event, including UWRF students, faculty and staff along with community members.

"We are so incredibly thankful for all the community support around this event," said student Lily Van Allen. "The community that has been built on and around campus truly made this event a success, and it was amazing to see everyone come out to raise money for the EBeauty Community."

Laura Jirsa, chief operations officer of EBeauty Community, said the fundraiser will provide wigs for 100 women in need across the U.S.

To prepare for the event, students collected donations, tallied and priced clothing items, coordinated a silent auction, planned craft activities, marketed the event and secured sponsorships.

David Bonko, associate professor and director of the Marketing Communications program teaches the Sales Promotions and Event Planning class. Hands-on learning projects such as the Gift and Thrift event offer students the opportunity to experience outcomes of their efforts beyond typical classroom experiences, he said.

"In a small-though-powerful way, most students realize they've made the world a better place," Bonko said. "It is my hope this mindset continues through their lives, for they are society's future school carnival volunteers and youth sports teams' fundraisers."