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## MEDIA RELEASE

A new hairdressing academy - supported by award-winning celebrity stylist Lee Stafford and operated by South Tyneside College – has opened for business in a recently-built £9m centre for integrated health and social care for older people.

Lee Stafford Education Academy@STC is a fresh focal point within Haven Court, which is in the grounds of South Tyneside District Hospital and specially created to support the needs of older people, especially those with dementia, their families and carers.

Open to the public, as well as service users, and boasting a range of hair and beauty offers, it is the second academy in the borough to bear the former British Men's Hairdresser of the Year's name.

The first, part of the national Lee Stafford Education tutoring and mentoring programme, opened in January within the college's Westoe campus in St George's Avenue, South Shields.

Both benefit from training sessions led by Lee and aim to teach lecturers standardised but durable hair care techniques, skills they pass on to their level 2 and level 3 students.

Julie Sloanes, Assistant Principal at South Tyneside College, said: "This is a fantastic new facility and one the public can really be a part of and take part in.

"Lee is a nationally celebrated hairdresser and his academies teach the really strong techniques that ensure lecturers have the best and strongest skills, which helps maintain the highest standards within this industry.

"The academy at Haven Court is yet another great example of how the college is working within the local community to boost skills and support learning and aspiration.

"We really want the public to be part of this exciting training opportunity, and they are welcome to come along and have their hair styled by our lecturers and students and to benefit from some superb offers."

Councillor Tracey Dixon, Lead Member for Wellbeing and Independence, said: "From the outset, we wanted Haven Court to be so much more than a dementia centre for our older residents. We wanted it to be a welcoming place where people could just pop in informally for a coffee with friends or to have their hair done. "By offering services in this way, we hope to make it easier for older people and their families to seek advice, if and when they need to, in an environment which is already familiar to them. Having a top-notch hair salon reinforces this approach and I hope many people will take advantage of this wonderful new salon."

Lee Whitfield, Operational Manager for Haven Court, which is run by South Tyneside integrated Care Limited, said: "This fantastic partnership with South Tyneside College will give their students an opportunity to develop their communications skills with older people with dementia in a safe environment."



Offers include a free luxury blow dry or free gel nails by collecting six stamps on a loyalty card which is soon to launch, with users also encouraged to 'like' the academy on Facebook or call 0191 427 3542 to keep up to date on special deals.

Lee created the education arm of his business to introduce a single recognised hairdressing training standard across the country.

His handpicked team of trainers is made up of salon owners and hairdressers, and includes his College Artistic Director Georgi Hunter, who coordinates training.

Once trained in new working methods, lecturers roll out remodeled programmes to learners.

The partnership also runs recruitment events for employers and students across the region, giving them the perfect opportunity to be part of Lee's hairdressing success story.

Although he operates partnerships with a number of colleges, none are in the same region, ensuring exclusivity of training.

The emphasis at Haven Court is on helping older people, including those with dementia, to live as independently as possible with the support of a high quality rehabilitation and therapeutic service to enable them to return to their own homes.

ENDS

Gareth Crickmer

Yellow Dog PR

Tel: 07887 727 681

[www.yellowdogpr.co.uk](http://www.yellowdogpr.co.uk)