

A Natural Hair Experience Full of Soul

A day full of black hair, skin, and art centered around powerful women of color.



Photo and Story by Amya Diggs

For many black women, hair is more than what's on their heads. It's an expression of who they are, and it shows the progression of black culture. From wraps to fro's to protective braiding styles, hair is a key identifying piece to black women everywhere. In hopes of bringing together black women in the New England area, The Created Curl hosts interactive events full of vendors, product demonstrations, and educational tips on hair care.

Many traditional black hairstyles like braids, locs, and twists can be traced back to the early years of African Civilization. These hairstyles were used to symbolize things like cultural tribes and social status. When the Atlantic slave trade began, black people were stripped of their culture, thus resulting in black features being ridiculed and compared to European features [1].

The comparison between white and black features is still a thing today. With the aggressive stripping of black culture, black people find themselves and features continuing to be overlooked by their white counterparts and debated by everyone.

Events like SOulFULLY Textured™, A Natural Hair Experience are so valued among the beautiful black community. Vendors were invited to introduce new products and offer suggestions to those struggling with specific hair issues, gift bags were provided with samples of valued products, and black women were there to support one another on their journey to owning their hair.

Shea butter, aloe vera, and honey are a few of the repeated ingredients that I found in many products from different vendors. These natural ingredients are meant to nourish hair rather than strip it down like harsh chemicals would.

Sharmin, the founder of Sharm Naturals, emphasized the importance of natural ingredients in hair care products. The reason why she started her company is because the harsh chemicals often found in typical haircare products were starting to cause damage to her hair. Having her own brand has allowed her to know exactly what she is putting in her hair. It also allows her to create natural products for other women to feel confident about using

The importance of community is already a big part of black culture, and with the constant debate around black hair, black women specifically have found it especially important to create a community for black hair to be celebrated and tended to. The lack of black hair resources is quite the issue everywhere. Many black hair care products are hard to find, and when they are found, the options to choose from are very limited.

“I have lived in the Boston area since 2001 and have found that Boston and the surrounding communities can feel like a desert when it comes to connecting to our culture and the products and services we desire,” says Nike Okediji, founder of The Curated Curl.

By creating spaces and events like The Created Curl has done, black people can come together and meet others who look like them while gaining access to local black created products for hair and skin is the most comforting thing for so many black women.

Marti Gilchrist and Denae Davis met each other while exploring the many different vendors present at SOulFULLY Textured™, A Natural Hair Experience. While talking to each other, they realized that they have a lot in common in terms of their hair journeys.

Gilchrist made a point that stood out to me, “My hair became a struggle where I work.”

Black hair has been a debate for many years in the workplace. To many companies, the natural state of black hair, including braids, is not a professional look.

Gilchrist's ongoing struggle was real life for her newly made friend. Davis has been struggling with her hair for the past five+ years. "I've been chemically treating my hair since I was 16. My hair told me it was tired, I'm almost 50."

Since then, Davis has been undergoing special replenishing, natural treatments to get her hair back to its pre-chemically damaged state.

SOuLFULLY Textured™, A Natural Hair Experience created a space for women to feel safe in their natural hair and skin. The community they have formed has helped many women get back to feeling, or to finally feel confident with where they are in their hair care journey.

[1] <https://www.stylist.co.uk/beauty/hair/black-hair-history-definitive-historic-moments/437183>