

Vanity benefits charity

By Linda Davis

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WALNUT CREEK - On its face, the words "vanity" and "charity" in the same sentence might be expected to furrow a brow or two.

But the 30 women who on Thursday sat for a little "trout pout," or got their frown lines plumped up, raised \$18,000 for victims of Hurricane Katrina by indulging themselves.

Dermatologist Jerome Potozkin, who has offices in Danville and Walnut Creek, decided to do a "vanity for charity" day at his office. He told all his patients that if they came in for a treatment that day, all his fees would go to charity. At \$325 to \$550 a pop for BOTOX® Cosmetic or Restylane® treatments, patients made out their checks to either the Red Cross or Habitat for Humanity, instead of to the doctor.

"I remember after Sept. 11, people came into the office to have treatments done and felt guilty about it," Potozkin said. "After Hurricane Katrina, I decided to help empower my patients to do for themselves and for others at the same time."

Brenda Jones, 57, of Hayward didn't hesitate when she received Potozkin's postcard about the charity day. It was about time for a BOTOX® Cosmetic treatment anyway, she said.

Beauty is more than skin deep for Jones, a cancer survivor who first visited Potozkin last December.

"I was so beat up with radiation and cancer, the whole thing, my girlfriend suggested I go see Dr. Potozkin," Jones said. "I needed something to boost my appearance, to feel better about myself."

Jones, who owns a community management company with her husband, Bob, has had treatments for age spots, spider veins and other nagging little signs of aging. She has plenty of reasons to embrace this new concept in giving.

"I felt blessed to be included in this campaign," Jones said. "It has given us vain women a great little nudge. It's a great way to feel better about yourself."