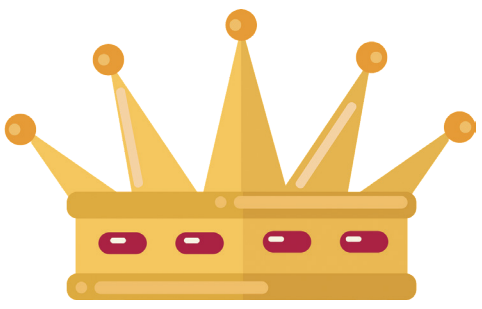


UConn hosts fifth CROWN Day

by Alana Taylor
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It has been five years since the University of Connecticut hosted its first Crown Day. What first began as a simple goal to address the cosmetic needs of students across campus expanded into a space where students can also socialize, grab a meal and study.

The event was hosted by the African American Cultural Center, the Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center and the Center for Access & Postsecondary Success program in partnership with UConn learning communities BSOUL and ScHOLA²RS in celebration of the 2019 CROWN Act — a law passed in California which stands for "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair."

In support of a ban on race-based hair discrimination in professional spaces, the CROWN Act was later ratified into Connecticut law in March 2021 — the same year this event was first held.

Located in the forum of Peter J. Werth Residence Tower, students from all over campus were encouraged to attend and be serviced by local businesses and student organizations, such as UCurls, a natural hair organization at UConn, after scheduling an appointment in advance.

To do so, students had to attend the mandatory CROWN Act program held by the AACC to engage in interactive conversations regarding identity and maintaining hair health. Then on Sunday, Nov. 1, many were able to receive a wide array of hairstyles ranging from a variation of protective hairstyles, like braids and locs, to silk presses.

Although the purpose of the event was to offer resources, the day meant more than simply offering hair appointments; it provided convenience in a region where few resources are available to students that may be struggling with their natural hair. 24% of past CROWN Day attendees reported that they typically travel one to three hours to obtain haircare services. 11% reported traveling more than three hours.

Josh Brown, director of ScHOLA²RS House and member of the planning committee, said that many students travel far to get their hair done.

"Just thinking about bringing stylists on campus so they could do natural hair for free— that is something that goes a long way," Brown said. "It's great that we just get to promote a space for it."

Local businesses and organizations were also present during the event for students to connect with.

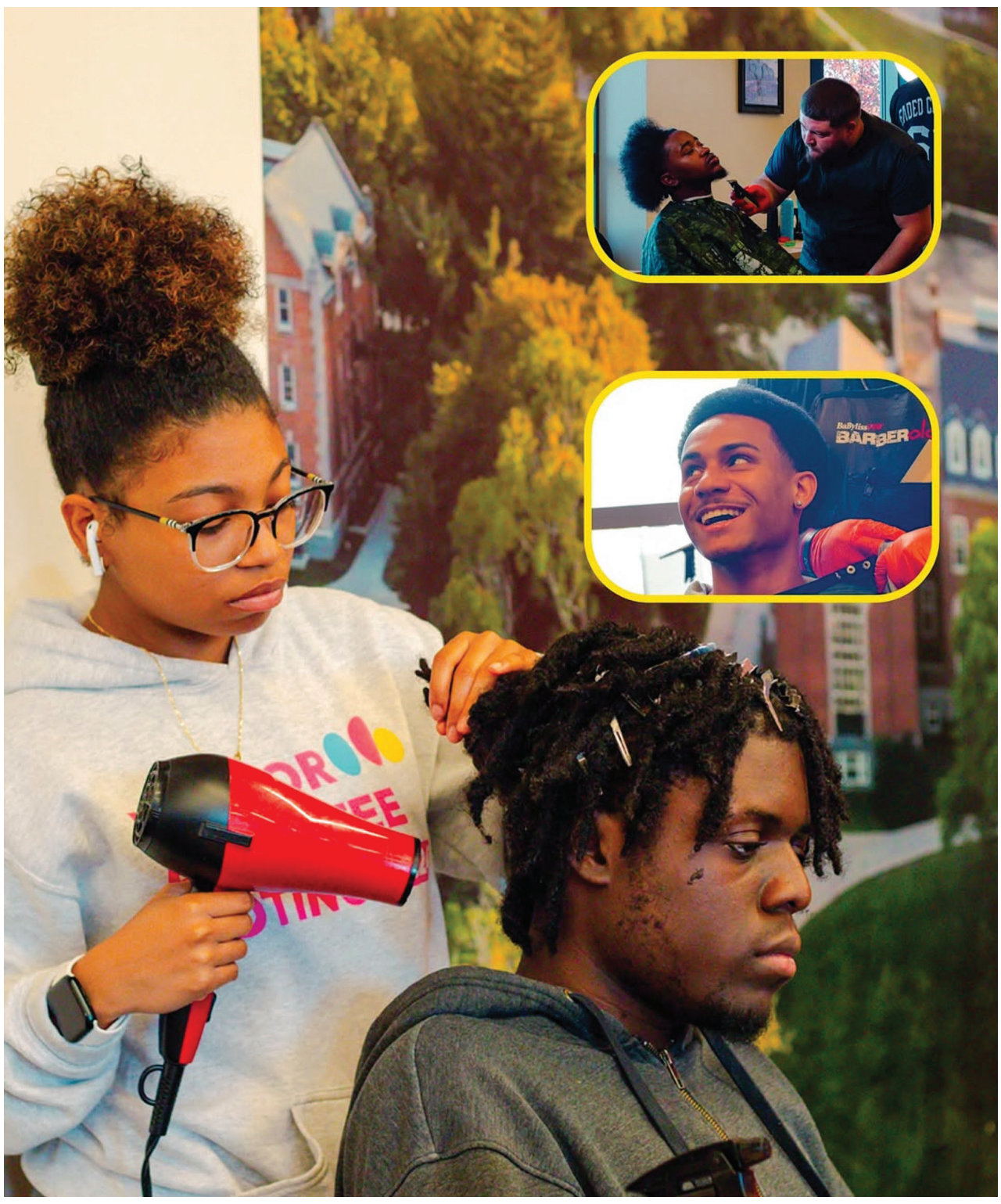
UCurls Vice President Summer Harvey recalled why free hair care is significant.

"We know money is a stressor for a lot of us and getting your hair done costs money," Harvey said. "So just having this event for students has been a great thing and we've heard great feedback."

For members of the UConn Living Learning Communities BSOUL and ScHOLA²RS, the event was about extending their community to others on campus. BSOUL Floor Mentor Mikayla Evans emphasized the goal of sharing resources with others, even if that starts with creating an inclusive environment.

"Having CROWN Day, honestly, is just a way for all of us here at UConn to express ourselves," Evans said.

This is why their efforts didn't end with providing hair-related care but creating an enthusiastic and inviting atmosphere that served multiple purposes. Even if students didn't schedule a hair appointment, they were welcomed to a plate of food, music and a space to study or chat with friends.



Students from the ScHOLA²RS learning community of UConn participating during Crown Day. This Crown Day was held in 2024.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @SCHOLA2RS_HOUSE ON INSTAGRAM.

"CROWN Day is an event dedicated to all university students at UConn," Harvey said.

While the annual event continues to receive positive feedback from students at the university, the planning committee still strives to have an even greater impact.

As of now, CROWN Day happens twice a year at UConn, once in the fall and again in the spring. For the committee, it's not just about the frequency at which these events are held, but what the day entails.

President and Floor Mentor of ScHOLA²RS House Caleb Awuah shared that he is pleased to see the involvement of more communities on campus but also wants to see it expand.

"I hope to see it at a larger scale," Awuah said. "It's great being able to service a lot of students, but I think there's a lot more students that could be served."

'Drive - The Pretenders': All romance, no racing

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Although the title suggests a movie about cars, "Drive - The Pretenders" focuses more on romance than intense car racing. The German romantic drama was released on Prime Video on Wednesday, Oct. 28.

It shares a familiar romantic storyline, featuring a love-contract. However, some parts of the story move too quickly, and a few important moments do not get enough attention or time to develop.

The story follows Sarah Jenkins (Lisa-Marie Koroll), whose father trained her as a racer since childhood, but currently works as a mechanic for a racing team. She is a talented racer and is working hard to become a professional driver. Meanwhile, Dante Annunziata (Amin Baahmed) is a well-known race driver who is facing problems surrounding his public image and relationship with Jenkins. The two agree to pretend to be engaged, but they gradually develop fire and their love for each other.

The acting makes a common plot interesting and vivid. The leads have chemistry. Koroll stood out to me and her athletic appearance accords with Sarah's background in racing.

One of the significant scenes that helps audiences dive deeper into the characters is when Dante talks about his past, more specifically, his sister, and viewers learn more about him and his motives. From my view, this scene is important because it shows a more personal side of his character and helps audiences understand his relationship with Sarah. However, I wish the film could spend more time on similar moments.

The film also shows the characters' personal problems and strong career goals, in addition to their relationship. However, some of these relationship scenes feel rushed. Certain storylines seem important at first, but the film moves before they are fully developed. By the time I started to care more about the characters, the film was already close to its ending, and some scenes could have had a stronger effect if they were given more time. I noticed this most clearly near the end.

The main conflict is resolved very abruptly. Since the film spends a lot of time evolving Sarah and Dante's relationship, I expected the ending to give the final conflict more attention. If the ending had moved more slowly, it might have been more satisfying.

I also noticed that the film does not show as much racing as I expected. Although the story takes place in the racing world, there are not many scenes of driving. Most of the film is about Sarah and Dante's relationship, so it feels more like a romance set in the racing world than a movie about racing itself.

I don't think this is necessarily a problem for viewers who mainly enjoy romantic films. However, people who are more interested in racing may wish there were more scenes on the track.

Overall, I enjoyed watching "Drive - The Pretenders." I liked the two main characters and the scenes that showed their lived experiences.

Rating: 4/5



Actress, Lisa-Marie Koroll, and actor, Amin Baahmed, posing on screen. The show, Drive - The Pretenders was released on Oct. 28, 2026 for the Prime Video UK.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PRIMEVIDEOUK ON INSTAGRAM