Written by Alaina L. Lewis
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Lynnea Doublette did not set out to take over the natural hair world in Minneapolis, but rather to fill a void that had yet to be explored.

Doublette is the force behind the Natural Hair Symposium, a quarterly event that brings together a group of women who share the same follicle of interest – natural hair. Her event provides lovers of the virgin coil, a platform to learn, absorb, and celebrate what it means to be a natural hair-wearing woman. On Saturday, Nov. 17, she kicked off her second event in the Penthouse of Marquette Place.

Doublette, who is also a fitness instructor that teaches a class on Zumba and aqua-Zumba at Lifetime Fitness and several other venues during the week, put together an impressive line-up of activities which spanned just a little under a five hour period. Her objective was simply to encourage and enforce a unity and sisterhood amongst the 30 plua naturals in attendance.

With other urban meccas already ahead of the curve when it comes to putting on events such as this, Doublette's idea of bringing her natural hair symposium to the Twin Cities has proven to be very welcomed and necessary for building a camaraderie and gateway of information with other like-minded individuals who either have gone natural, or are considering going natural and are not well versed with the upkeep and regimens that go into maintaining hair and health.

To some, natural hair seems simple enough to care for since a person is not putting any harsh chemicals in one's hair – at least that person should not be, however, not many naturals or "newbies" to the craze are aware of things such as how often to condition or trim their hair, or even what type of shampoo and moisturizer should be used to promote growth versus clogging one's pores.

"I wanted to get all the naturals together in a mutual space so that we could do a couple of things – learn from each other about our natural hair, find out ways to embrace it, what websites and blogs are out there for us, provide them with guest speakers, and more," said Doublette. "There was a lot of information given about keeping your hair trimmed, getting the oil in your hair as well as getting it out of your hair and more."

Guests of the event were treated to a hair show, product giveaways, an informative discussion

on the must have essentials for winter hair care, a delicious and healthy menu from Chef Jennifer Martin, vendors, and guest speakers such as Jessica McGuinty founder of Jessicurl and fitness instructor Lorrie Insisiengmay. There were workshops on how to make shea butter and an olive oil conditioning blend. Guests were able to take home the sample they created to try out on their hair.

"This time around we're getting more connected with a total mind and body, fitness and health. We're going to make sure that we take care of our bodies so that our hair and our skin is looking good naturally since we got our natural locks going," said Doublette. "I think we're reaching more people. More people are finding out and learning about the natural hair symposium. It's exciting to meet new naturals, listen to their story, and find out about their hair care regimens and winter regimens."

Individuals went home with a wealth of information and product samples provided by sponsors such as Mizani, Sofn'Free's Gro Healthy line, as well as items sold at Twin Cities own Malobe Natural Hair Salon which is one of the leaders in natural hair upkeep.

Doublette is already working hard on planning a spring get together for the third Natural Hair Symposium. A date has yet to be determined. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/NaturalHairForTheTotalWoman or email Lynnea.Doublette@tria.com .