



CAYLA

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# The Courage to *Be Seen*

Finding the Divine in the Chair

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REFRESH HAIR STUDIO

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*One salon owner's raw, honest journey, from an eleven-year-old shampoo girl to building a sanctuary where gray is gorgeous, healing is real, and every client finally feels seen.*

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*"Divinity is not about perfection. It is about the courage to stop pretending, stop hiding, and finally be proud of the reflection in the mirror."*

**Refresh Hair Studio**

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**I** will be honest with you. I did not walk into this magazine feature feeling "divine." In fact, most days I feel quite the opposite. But as I look at the people who sit in my chair, regardless of gender, age, or where they come from, I realize that divinity is not about perfection. It is about the raw, honest season of life many of us are in right now. We are shedding who we think we should be so we can finally step into who we actually are. It takes courage to stop pretending, stop hiding, and finally be proud of the reflection in the mirror. My path to that realization was anything but a straight line.



## ORIGINS

I grew up in the industry as an eleven year old shampoo girl in my mom's salon. I still remember the smell of perm solution and cigarettes, back when you could smoke at the styling station and the dryers had built in ashtrays. I would get a twenty five cent tip for a shampoo while listening to the roller set crowd laugh and gossip. It felt like a party, a community, and a therapeutic space all in one.

My mom sold her shop when I was fourteen, but the salon world never really left me. I continued working in the industry, including receptionist roles at large salons like Mario Tricoci. Eventually I hit a wall. The intimacy between stylist and client started to disappear in those large environments where everything was divided into departments. For a while I stepped away and took a decade long detour into real estate and restaurants, but something about the salon world kept pulling me back.

*"They were not looking for a deal. They were looking for someone to finally listen to them."*



CHICAGO-BASED



## THE LEAP

One day I reached my limit. I packed my things, got into a Lyft, and left. I remember crying and telling the driver I was probably going to go work at Target.

But as we drove past a building with salon suites, something inside my brain flipped. Two days later I signed a lease on a two chair suite. I had absolutely no plan. But I had curiosity.

I started investing in coaching programs that promised proven methods. I spent thousands of dollars trying to learn the right way to build a salon business, but much of it felt like scripts that did not fit who I was. I was told I did not need a website. I was told that Groupon clients were trash and would never become loyal customers. My gut told me otherwise. So I built a killer website and those Groupon clients became the foundation of my brand. They simply wanted someone who would listen.



EVERY CLIENT RECEIVES FULL ATTENTION



COLOR ARTISTRY IN ACTION



THE REFRESH TEAM

## The Birth of Gray Blending

Gray blending started organically as high stakes color correction for women who were tired of the high maintenance color cycle. Many of them were also trying to fix years of at home box dye that had left their hair dark, muddy, or compromised.

After the pandemic, even more women began coming in saying they had been staring at themselves on Zoom and realizing they did not love the reflection looking back. I quickly realized that gray blending is never one size fits all. Everyone has a different percentage of silver and a different vision for how they want to age.

To support that, I dove deeply back into education. I obsessed over color theory and corrective color techniques so I could guide my clients through a healthier transition process. My number one priority has always been maintaining the integrity of the hair. Most people are not in a position to attack their hair with aggressive bleaching. They want a smarter, more personalized journey.

That search for integrity eventually led me to Megix 10. The coverage is transparent and restorative, which has been especially powerful for women navigating hormonal shifts during perimenopause and menopause. Clients began telling me their hair had never felt better.

## The Refresh Studio

While gray blending has become my signature service, Refresh Hair Studio has grown into something much bigger. When I brought on my second stylist, Cayla, the energy of the studio shifted. I originally thought hiring someone would allow me to rest more, but instead the business began to boom.

Cayla is another industry kid whose mother is also a stylist. She brings an incredible understanding of color theory and hair chemistry. Her specialties include lived in color and modern perms that bring classic techniques back in a fresh way. Together we created a studio that welcomes everyone.

We also introduced Luxury Express services like our Express Detox for hard water buildup and Express Glaze for quick tone refreshes because we know our clients' time is just as valuable as their hair. Our philosophy is simple. Every client receives our full attention and full transparency.

That same philosophy eventually inspired us to create our own product line called Refresh Potions. Cayla first suggested the idea after watching me constantly experiment with different brands. I wanted products that were high performing, lightly scented, and free from heavy unnecessary chemicals. Most importantly, I wanted formulas based on what my clients were actually asking for.

## The Hairipist

Today, as I approach fifty, my health has become one of my greatest personal challenges. I have navigated endometriosis, multiple surgeries, and surgical menopause while raising an eight-year-old son.

There are days when the brain fog is heavy and the night sweats are brutal. But then I walk into the studio. I sit next to a client. We talk. We laugh. We share stories. That connection reminds me why I am here.

My son once told his teacher that his favorite thing about me is how curious I am. He is right. That curiosity is what keeps me empathetic. I am not just a stylist. I am a Hairipist.

If you feel called to do more or be more, stay curious. Do not be afraid to challenge the proven scripts. Because at the end of the day, for us Hairipists, it is never just about the hair. It is about the conversations, the courage, and the connections that last long after the color fades.

# Jamie Morales

[www.refreshhairstudiochicago.com](http://www.refreshhairstudiochicago.com)

