

Makeup Magic
Senior Julie Piedra uses makeup as an outlet for creativity
Story by: Jordyn Laudanno

After years of painting, senior Julie Piedra found her passion as a seventh grader, using her blending brushes and eyeshadow palettes to decorate a new kind of canvas: her face. Once she began displaying her talents, Piedra would receive compliments and suggestions encircling her newfound gift. Encouraged by the constant praise, Piedra started doing makeup for friends and peers, who eventually became customers.

“I started off really bad, but I just kept practicing and I found a love for it,” Piedra said. “Then I just started doing people’s makeup, and they said I should make an [Instagram] account, so I did.”

A vital step in her career in cosmetic artistry was taking her clients advice and creating a social media platform for herself where she can express her love for makeup and her skills. For Piedra, Instagram became this place. The diverse platform attracts aspiring makeup artists, such as Piedra, to not only practice their craft, but also inspire their followers through creative posts and video tutorials.

Professional makeup icons, like Jeffree Star, have large followings on Instagram with over 4 million people waiting for their newest update. They post about things called “swatches,” or examples that show what the product looks like on their arm, along with tutorials and product recommendations. Scrolling through makeup tutorials everyday, it was not hard for Piedra to see the compatibility of her newfound passion and Instagram’s features.

“I watched a lot of the videos and then I practiced and they give me inspiration so I keep getting better,” Piedra said. “Jeffree Star, James Charles and Tati Westbrook have influenced me greatly; I love doing things differently, just like they do.”

Piedra’s account started when she was a freshman, and she has been posting on it ever since. With 150 followers, her pictures showcase makeup looks for Homecoming and senior pictures. Her account is still in the process of growing, and she is hopeful that with new opportunities, her following will expand.

Through advertising her contact information in her bio, she has been hired to do makeup on students attending events hosted by MSD. In total, she’s accumulated approximately 40 clients.

“Julie did my makeup for my senior pictures, and it turned out amazing. I told her exactly what I wanted and she did it and exceeded my expectations. I highly recommend her,” senior Danielle Gilbert said.

“Honestly, [the money is] just a plus, I don’t really do it for the money. I love to do it, and it’s just a side business,” Piedra said. “Most of [my clients] are my friends. I’ve only had a couple I didn’t know, but it’s been a good experience because I get to learn a lot about other people and make new friends.”

Piedra understood the mass influx of makeup artist videos on Instagram. Thus, she felt it was essential to create her own brand in order to set herself apart from the crowd. In doing so, her posts are unique to her interests and demonstrate her best skills.

“I hope to take [my makeup career] as far as I can and own a business in the future,” Piedra said. “I am going to study education and business, and I want to have a couple businesses when I’m older. I want to open a preschool and a makeup line.”

Piedra is going to study at Bethune Cookman University where she will be playing for the school’s volleyball team; simultaneously, Piedra will continue working on her career and advancing her skills with makeup.