Vonne Whitehurst's vision is almost gone due to a degenerative disease. So, several times a week, she visits VISIONS at Selis Manor in Manhattan for various activities for seniors with vision loss.

As last Tuesday approached, Whitehurst, 68, of Brooklyn, eagerly awaited her visit. She had an appointment for a free makeover from a squad of Hunter College students with GlamourGals, a nonprofit comprising high school and college students who give makeovers in nursing homes and senior centers.

"When they tell us they're coming, your mindset is, I can't wait," says Whitehurst, who received a manicure while more than a dozen women were being moisturized and manicured.

"It lifts our spirits," she adds. "Getting older, we want to be spry and happy, and this is what this brings to us. It's a thing of pampering yourself. At some time we could do it ourselves, and now we can."

Rachel Doyle, the founder of GlamourGals, wants to make sure that seniors can always receive a bit of pampering. The group was founded 16 years ago when Doyle, now 32, was inspired by her experiences with her grandmother. Originally from Long Island, Doyle visited her grandmother in a Nevada nursing home, where the teen would take her to the local malls for makeovers, bringing glamour and cheer to her day.

In 1999, during Doyle's junior year at Commack High School on Long Island, she decided to join with fellow high school students to start bringing makeovers to the residents of the Gurwin Jewish Geriatric Center nursing home. She did her first GlamourGals makeover with three women there in early 2000.

"I love to make people smile," says Rachel. "I get a lot of personal satisfaction in making someone's day better."

GlamourGals has since grown to 100 different chapters in 17 states and Canada, with most delivering a makeover a month. Last year, GlamourGals grew by 30 new chapters, thanks to a $150,000 grant from the Women Helping Others Foundation. "We have this idea of bringing moments of beauty," says Doyle. "It transcends the barriers between the young and old."

Essence Eley, 21, a junior biochemistry major, is giving Marion Sheppard, 69, who is legally blind, a manicure. "We can't get out there to get our nails or our face done so by them coming here, it motivates us to keep pretty," says Sheppard, "and feel better about ourselves."

Aging, living in a nursing home, or suffering from a disabling condition is no reason not to feel good about appearances, agrees Debbie Zanca, 64, as she was receiving a facial from freshman Welston Barron, 18.

"It gives us a feeling of confidence and reassurance that this will help you feel better and look better," she says.

Providing makeovers helps the volunteers feel good, too. "Being here gives me a sense of purpose," says Stephanie Azzopardi, 21, a biology major.

Azzopardi attended her first makeover when she was 13 years old. Since then she estimates she's administered "thousands" of makeovers. "I want to give back, and this is it for me," Azzopardi says. "I love this kind of work."

Adds Tina Zhang, 19, a sophomore at Hunter College and the president of its GlamourGals chapter: "You go in expecting to just paint nails, talk to them — but you find you are enjoying yourself so much. It's an amazing experience."