



# Heavenly Essence: Miracle in the Making

**H**eavenly Essence was founded in 2005 by Darlene Alexander, a credentialed and seasoned cosmetologist. In 2000, Alexander developed chronic fatigue syndrome due to years of exposure to mold, methane gas, and other chemicals. Chronic fatigue often causes strong allergic reactions or sensitivity to fragrances and synthetic chemicals. Alexander believes these ingredients are used in many of today's hair care products, particularly those geared toward the African American and Latino market.

Because Alexander experienced allergic reactions to existing hair care products she decided to develop a hypo-allergenic shampoo and conditioner made of natural, pure ingredients that she could use safely. Inspired by her personal experiences and the need for a hypo-allergenic brand of hair care products in the ethnic beauty market, Alexander felt compelled to help other consumers with allergies or fragrance sensitivities. She worked closely with a chemist and developed the proprietary formula for the Pure'ity™ brand, a unique blend of natural ingredients and essential oils. Tested only on human beings, the Pure'ity™ line contains no dangerous parabens or harsh synthetic chemicals. Located in California, Quinne Design Associates ([www.QuinneDesign.com](http://www.QuinneDesign.com)) created and handled the branding, packaging, brochure, website, and advertising campaigns for Alexander.

The Pure'ity™ brand will launch late summer of 2008 with the introduction of Pure'ity™ Shampoo and Pure'ity™ Conditioner (in Peppermint or Citrus) in beauty supply stores and hair salons. The attractive price point (under \$10 per 8 oz. bottle) will make the Pure'ity™ line a compelling buy for health-conscious African American and Latino consumers.

And before Darlene Alexander's schedule got any busier with her launch, *OTC Beauty Magazine* had the opportunity to speak with Alexander, upclose and personal.

**OTC: When you received the news that you had chemical exposure, did you say to yourself: 'You know what? I am done with this, and I want to do something for myself and something for other women?'**

**Alexander:** After my chemical exposure that was basically around 2000, I would say about two or three years after that, about 2003, we really started doing research and decided I can't handle this anymore; I have to do something for me and yes, for other women. I had light headedness, ear aches, and many more side effects. Just imagine everything associated with toxicity. I knew I had to do

something for myself and for others; I knew there were more people out there that had this same problem.

**OTC: Did you ever feel like, 'Darlene, you can do this? Maybe something for you, but for other people?' Did you ever feel that negativity like 'Oh, it's probably too big for it to come true in real life' or were you always optimistic and ambitious about your desire?**

**Alexander:** At first, I will say I wasn't as optimistic, but then, as time went by, I knew that yes, although it is too big for me, I was able to see the final vision. It can be done, and it has been done in the past by other wonderful women.

**OTC: What was your first step? Was it specifically working on the product, working with the scientist or would you say your first step was trying to discover who your target audience was going to be?**

**Alexander:** I would say the first step was actually trying to define what type of ingredients we wanted to place in the products, so immediately I started to work with a chemist.

**OTC: Can you reveal your signature ingredient?**

**Alexander:** I would have to say one of the main signature ingredients is Shea butter.

**OTC: How was your relationship between the chemist? I hear you were the guinea pig for the discovery of the formula.**

**Alexander:** I worked with one chemist and basically gave him exactly what I wanted in the product. The first prototype didn't turn out as

well and immediately, we needed to make improvements. So, I just went through the list again and told him this is what I want, and I can't tolerate a whole lot of the chemicals and fragrance, can you please just bring it down a step? And the second time we were able to actually put together a formula that worked.

**OTC: After identifying the formula, what was your next step after that?**

**Alexander:** Learning about the business of targeting to your own market, defining the target market, and learning how to actually structure our company was the second and a crucial step for us.

**OTC: What was your challenge in building the structure for the business?**

**Alexander:** Since I knew about the hair, but I didn't know about business, that was my particular challenge. I knew I needed to find individuals, consultants that could guide us. And, I chose to delegate to the right people. We needed to have a strategic plan in order to bring this vision to completion. Although I wasn't super experienced in business, I combined my current intelligence with my intuition in order to save from making mistakes.

**OTC: Can you explain your philosophy behind your packaging and its look?**

**Alexander:** The packaging, to me, is elegant, and it is so professional. They resemble something pure. Pure, clean, simple. Also, the way it's designed, it is extremely easy to talk about for brand identification. You can literally say, 'Look for the P, it's the hypo-allergenic one.' I wanted something very easy so others can pick out from the shelf.



Older son Sheldon; Darlene Alexander with husband, Michael; younger son Michael, Jr.

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**OTC: When someone sees the bottle and picks it up, they open it and smell it, describe what the experience would be for the consumer.**

**Alexander:** Original. They are going to smell clean, refreshing. It simply smells clean and refreshing when you open it up. You will not find this overwhelming fragrance that you are going to receive and turn away from.

**OTC: What advice would you provide our readers on how to properly present your product in their stores? How would you want them to represent your product line?**

**Alexander:** I feel through our Pure'ity™ line, we are actually giving distributors, beauty supply stores, and salons the opportunity to provide quality, hypo-allergenic hair products to the consumers; something they have never had on their shelves before.

**OTC: Have you thought about making personal appearances or speaking directly to store owners?**

**Alexander:** Yes, that is in our future plans. We're actually putting that together for our launch along with our promotional activities. We want to present and personally hand our products and introduce ourselves to the beauty supply owners.

**OTC: What advice would you give someone else, maybe not specifically in the hypo-allergenic market, but maybe someone that's interested in launching their own product line?**

**Alexander:** Never give up. No matter how it looks or if you don't see how it's going to happen. Just keep going; keep believing. Believe in yourself when others don't believe in you.

**OTC: This is more of a personal question: Tell me something about yourself that has made you the woman you are today and the family-loving individual you are.**

**Alexander:** Since I went through a period in my life of being sick, it has actually strengthened me in ways that I can never imagine. I used to be so afraid of so many things; just thinking of starting a business would not have crossed my mind. But, there was a need and I needed, that need. I needed to create a solution, so I could help not only myself, but others.

**OTC: Lastly, how did you come up with the name of your company and the product line?**

**Alexander:** My prayer group became involved. We actually got together, and we went through names of other companies and products and these are the names we chose. otc



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Formulated by Heavenly Essence, Pure'ity™ products are exclusive to the Pure'ity™ brand. Based in California, the company is a member of the Professional Beauty Association (PBA) and MBE certified with the National Minority Supplier Development Council. For more information about Heavenly Essence and Pure'ity™ hair care products, please contact 916-501-3766.