

RiverzEdge teens stage 'green, socially conscious' fashion show on May 30

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WOONSOCKET - It's not your usual fashion show.

Color, texture and shape all have a place in Greenstreets, a fashion show fund-raiser by RiverzEdge teen participants who have assembled couture comprised of all recycled materials.

With an eye to the future, participants are making the hippest, greenest and most socially conscious designs.

The effect is upbeat, fresh and fun to look at, said Tom West, a teacher at RiverzEdge, a youth development program giving youth in northern Rhode Island paid employment in the arts and a voice in the community.

Based in Woonsocket, RiverzEdge arts project engages young men and women in a lifestyle of disciplined effort, creative expression and economic self-reliance.

West, who is overseeing the students involved in the fashion show, said he's "impressed with the innovative work that's happening" at the studio.

Working in the clothing industry for six years, West said the students came up with new-to-the-industry ideas that, he said, "really interested me." The participants made outfits for themselves as well as for other models of the opposite

sex in the show.

"The students become a fashion designer for someone else," said West, who allowed the fashion show designers "to go with their ideas."

Other than having to use recycled clothing, participants were given artistic freedom to come up with their own designs. Some collaborated with others to generate ideas and some worked solo.

"They took chances," he said, adding that sometimes it worked and, when it didn't, at least new ideas were generated.

For Steve Harden, the look is all about contrasting dark and bright colors in the outfits he created.

"I love color," he said.

The 18-year-old Woonsocket resident and junior at Woonsocket High School, said that besides using fluorescent colors in the clothes he designed, he likes to include animals in his designs. Usually, he creates a combination of animals.

The female outfit he designed is complementary to his own and features a panda/fox. He took a black velour jacket he found at the Salvation Army and silkscreened a floral design on it.

Luis Rivas, 15, of Woonsocket, took a men's black, pin-striped suit and hand-painted silver polka dots on the collar and lapel. He also painted a silver-colored mirror

on the back of the suit.

Rosabel Forte, 14, of North Smithfield and a student at Beacon Charter High School for the Arts in Woonsocket, said she had "loads of fun" creating an outfit with the theme of anti-violence. Though there is a gun imprinted on the shirt she designed, she added flow-ers to it.

Jonathan Aponte, 19, of Woonsocket, said religion has an effect on his art. He likes to put a picture of Jesus on everything he creates. So, when he designed a suit, he screen printed the image of Jesus with a crown of thorns. On the brown suit jacket and pants, there are vines painted.

Aponte came up with his own clothing line: "Breaking the Mold" which he sells at his church.

Liz Collins, a world-renowned fashion designer and textile artist, is the emcee for the evening. Special guest designer Joan Wyand is on tap. Patrice Wood, anchor for NBC 10 News, is the honorary chair of the event.

The May 30 event runs from 7 to 10 p.m. in the Atrium at the Peetless Lofts, 150 Union St., Providence, the corner of Union & Westminster streets. The fashion show starts at 8.

Tickets are \$45 in advance and can be purchased online at www.riverzedgearts.org or by calling 767-2100.

RiverzEdge Arts Projects runs



Valley Breeze photo by Patricia A. Russell

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