GIRLS IN FASHION

Do you love fashion? These girls all started their very own fashion-based businesses. Find out how they took their dreams from sketchpad to reality...and how you can, too.

By Sara Rowe
As far back as she can remember, Cecilia’s had a passion for fashion. As a kindergartener, she raided closets and customized clothes using scissors, tape, and ponytail holders. Then she received a sewing machine for her sixth birthday and started taking sewing lessons. Frustrated by an instructor who insisted that the fabrics she chose didn’t match, Cecilia began designing her own garments so she’d have more freedom.

“I love to work with new fabrics, new colors, and new design ideas,” Cecilia says. “Fashion is like a language in itself to express my dreams.”

At age 10, she had her very first “trunk sale” (a showing of her dresses at a local store), and sold 50 dresses to excited girls who loved her style. That was the start of a thriving business that Cecilia hopes to continue into adulthood. No wonder she firmly believes, “You do not have to wait to be an adult to find your passion!”

“Follow your dreams and just go for it. There is enough room in this world for anyone who wants to create fashion! Don’t let people discourage you; if you want it, you can do it!”

Cecilia Cassini
AGE 13
FASHION DESIGN
CeciliaCassini.com
When Maggie lost her favorite necklace two years ago, she decided to make a replacement out of old jewelry and a pair of tights. After other girls asked Maggie to make necklaces for them, too, Maggie visited a local store with some of her creations. Pushing aside her nervousness, she asked for the owner, let her try one on, and explained how unique her necklaces were. To Maggie’s delight, the store took all she had—and then ordered more!

If you have a product you’d like to sell, Maggie suggests, “Be fearless. Talk to the store owner or manager. That’s who makes the decisions. Know your product well, because the owner or manager will ask lots of questions.”

Beyond visiting stores personally, Maggie and her family have also spread the word about her business through her web site and by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Maggie’s jewelry is now sold in stores in seven states as well as online.

“Find something you love and figure out a way to make it a business. Don’t be afraid to ask for help—chances are someone has done this before and would love to help you with your dream.”
Find something that you love to do, and then find out how that thing can help other people. You’re never too young to change a life on the other side of the world.

Two years ago, Ellie Zika learned a little about life in Rwanda, Africa, and it got her thinking. “Before that, I didn’t know that there were kids in Rwanda having to get up and work all day instead of going to school,” Ellie says. “I started thinking that if people in Rwanda aren’t any different from you and me, they should be able to have food and go to school just like us.”

Shortly afterward, Ellie heard about an organization that helps widows in Rwanda support their families by selling yarn the women produce. Ellie had recently learned to knit and loved making hats. Brainstorming with her parents, she came up with the idea for KidKnits: They could sell hat-making kits for kids and include the yarn in the kits.

Ellie’s favorite part of KidKnits is visiting schools to share stories about life in third-world countries and teach kids how to knit a KidKnits hat. She also loved visiting Rwanda and meeting the women she’s helping. “It was unbelievable when I saw their faces. They were so happy,” Ellie says. “After I visited them, I knew they were real and had their own stories to tell.”