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Published December 3rd, 2014

Local Teen Competes on 'Project Runway: Threads'

By Jennifer Wake

Most girls dream about becoming a princess when they're little, but for 16-year-old Julia Husch, a junior at Acalanes High School, her dream focused more on designing the princess's dress. Since she was a preschooler, Husch has been sewing. "When I was 3 years old I started sewing doll clothes with my mom," Husch said, "and in fourth grade I began classes at Sewnow (in Lafayette)." Husch now teaches at Sewnow to mixed age classes, including adults, and on Dec. 11 she will put her design abilities to the test as a contestant on the TV show "Project Runway: Threads," where three young designers compete to see whose fashions will lead them to a \$25,000 prize package, including being featured in Seventeen magazine.

"Julia has that rare combination of technical expertise and design talent and she is always excited to try new ideas, learn new techniques, and contribute in a team environment," said Sewnow owner Susan Goldie. "She continuously thinks outside the box and knows how to use her tremendous energy to conceive of and complete some very complicated tailoring and garment projects. She has been dubbed aptly by one of our younger sewers as the 'James Bond of Sewing,' and it is true!" Before filming the program, Husch said there was an at-home challenge, and each designer brought a look they made ahead of time to show. "The winner of that got an advantage later. We had one day to complete the challenge along with a surprise twist challenge, which at the time we didn't know was coming," Husch said. "Then both looks walked the runway and were judged." She also conducted interviews on Skype as part of the qualification process, where she showed off some of her designs.

"The competition was crazy fun and crazy stressful!" she said. "I was against two other designers, both of which were older than me and very talented."

Husch also student directs, designs costumes and build sets for the Acalanes DramaDons and musical productions, and she participates in Odyssey of the Mind (her team made it to the World Finals last year), but fashion is her first love. "When I'm sewing/designing it's like I've escaped the outside world, my sewing room is my happy place," said Husch. "My friends like to say I live under a rock with my sewing machine due to my complete lack of popular culture knowledge and an abundance of anything sewing related. I really love how clothes can transform or reflect how a person feels or sees themselves." Her goal is to have her own clothing line, "Julia Husch," and create clothes women love and feel great about wearing.

"I believe that appearing on 'Project Runway: Threads' is a wonderful milestone for Julia because not only did it allow her to connect with her design and age peers, it allowed her to showcase her designs to a much wider audience," said Goldie. "There are very few avenues for recognition in the fashion design field for designers Julia's age and this is a phenomenal opportunity for her. I am so very proud of her and super excited to watch the show."

"Project Runway: Threads" airs at 10 p.m. Dec. 11 on Lifetime. Check local listings for more information.

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