

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Dayton Emerging Fashion
Incubator (DE-FI) LLC

WELCOME MESSAGE

In 2013, we set out to do more than just produce fashion shows, we set out to make things right.

The previous iteration of Dayton Fashion Week left our creative community fractured and disappointed. Relationships were strained, dreams were stalled, and trust had been deeply shaken. As someone who witnessed the fallout firsthand and was deeply affected by the broken promises of Dayton Fashion Week's owner, I knew that if we were going to restore the region's faith in fashion as a legitimate, thriving industry, we needed to do it radically differently...(DE-FI)antly different.

Before (DE-FI) even had a name, we were already moving with purpose loading up vans and taking models to Chicago for professional development, scouting events, and real-world exposure to the industry. We didn't wait for a perfect plan, a pristine platform or permission. We simply acted and showed up.

Our official launch party in the summer of 2013 was both a celebration and an apology. A heartfelt acknowledgement to everyone who had been burned before by the broken promises of the owner of Dayton Fashion Week in 2012. I wanted to give people a reason to believe again and more importantly, a reason to stay and build with us. That evening wasn't about fanfare, it was about accountability, redemption, and the beginning of a new standard.

This first year, our mission was clear to create a sustainable, professional ecosystem that launched our designers and talent into broader regional markets. And we did exactly that. With no formal roadmap and every door earned, not opened, we began building what would become one of the most quietly influential fashion incubators in the country. Whether through editorials, castings, or partnerships, we made sure our designers, models, and creative professionals had the tools, access, and support needed to be seen, heard, and respected in this industry.

Looking back, 2013 was just the beginning. It was raw. It was stressful. It was real. And it was rooted in the kind of (DE-FI)ance that only comes when you're determined to reclaim a narrative and rebuild it brick by brick with integrity.

To everyone who took a chance on us this first year; thank you. You are part of a foundation that continues to grow, inspire, and disrupt for all the right reasons.

With purpose and pride,
Caressa L. Brown
Owner/Director
(DE-FI) Global INC



COMPANY PROFILE

Est. 2013 | Dayton, Ohio

The Dayton Emerging Fashion Incubator (DE-FI) LLC was established in 2013 as a bold response to the fractured trust and missed opportunities left behind by a previous fashion initiative in the city. From the beginning, (DE-FI) was more than a name, it was a grassroots movement grounded in integrity, community accountability, and economic opportunity. What started as a redemptive platform for fashion creatives has since grown into a regional force, developing a pipeline that connects Dayton's untapped talent to the global fashion industry.

At its core, (DE-FI) was built to be the business side of the runway.

Long before the word "incubator" became a buzzword, (DE-FI) was laying the groundwork for an ecosystem that included training, mentorship, real-world experience, and market access for models, designers, photographers, stylists, and production teams. (DE-FI) focused not just on creativity, but on equipping talent with the professional tools, business skills, and industry credibility necessary to succeed and sustain their careers.

In our inaugural year, (DE-FI) launched a scouting and professional development initiative, taking models and designers to Chicago and surrounding cities to engage with fashion markets outside of Dayton. These efforts were intentional, not only to rebuild local confidence in the industry, but to ensure our talent could thrive far beyond it.

Our 2013 programming included intimate castings, editorial shoots, and community events, all with one purpose: to show that high fashion, professionalism, and economic potential could and should exist in cities like Dayton. We believed then, as we do now, that fashion is not just an art form, but an engine for jobs, education, and cross-industry innovation.

With no major funding, but with deep credibility and commitment, (DE-FI) became a trusted platform for fashion professionals who had been overlooked, underestimated, or misrepresented. In its first year, (DE-FI) became a model for what happens when you center authenticity, mentorship, and purpose in an industry too often (DE-FI)ned by surface-level glitz.

Key Areas of Focus in 2013:

- Professional development for aspiring models and designers
- Regional scouting trips and industry networking
- Inclusive castings with industry-standard training
- Community healing and rebuilding trust in Dayton's fashion scene
- Creating a foundation for long-term industry infrastructure

(DE-FI) didn't just emerge, we arrived with intention, both creating and offering a new blueprint for how regional fashion ecosystems can be built and sustained from the ground up. And in doing so, it put Dayton back on the map as a place where creativity, culture, and commerce collide with purpose.



(DE-FI)[®]

BUSINESS REVIEW

Year 2013

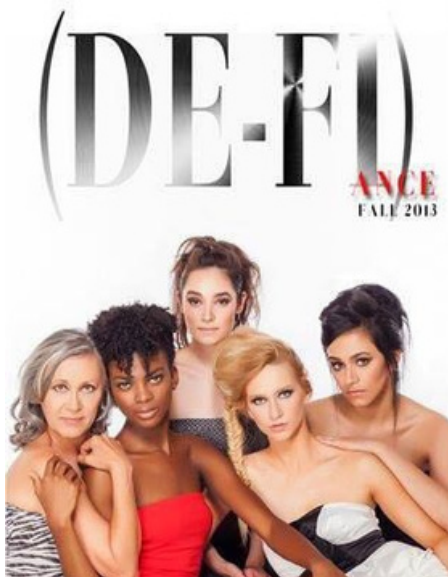
In February 2013, the Dayton Emerging Fashion Incubator (DE-FI) officially launched as a bold, volunteer-driven initiative committed to rebuilding trust, restoring professionalism, and reimagining what was possible for Dayton's creative economy. Emerging from the shadows of a failed fashion venture that left a community skeptical, (DE-FI) was born out of both necessity and (DE-FI)ance with a mission to do things differently, with integrity at the forefront.

(DE-FI) opened its doors as a free, accessible platform for Dayton-based creatives models, designers, photographers, stylists, and entrepreneurs providing not just opportunity, but structure, guidance, and professional development that had long been missing in the region.

Fashion in the Mystic Garden Launch Party: A Symbolic Reintroduction

By July 2013, that vision came to life with the debut of "Fashion in the Mystic Garden," a landmark launch event held at the SunWatch Indian Village & Archaeological Park, a symbolic location designed to honor history and community while reintroducing fashion through a lens of respect and renewal, the event drew over 400 attendees.

The evening was hosted by Amber Watson, reporter for Dayton's FOX 45, and also served as a charitable outreach opportunity partnering with Be The Match, where 12 guests registering to become bone marrow donors. This fashion experience served as a promise that (DE-FI) would lead with openness, honesty, and transparency with community outreach as the cornerstone of our foundation.



(DE-FI)ance Magazine Debut

The event also marked the reveal of the premiere cover of (DE-FI)ance Magazine, with cover models:

Irene Bosma-Smallwood
Aube Linda Jolicoeur
Monica Gonzalez
Keilah Jude
Jasmine Kashani

Photography by: Lamar Pacley
Cover Design by: Quincy Macklin
Editor-in-Chief: Leslie Heck
Makeup Artist: Angelica Ross
Hair Stylist: Stacia McVey

INDUSTRY CONNECTIVITY

From Dayton to NYC

By September 2013, (DE-FI)'s Owner/Director Caressa L. Brown had built a working fashion pipeline to New York Fashion Week via the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA). She began working behind the scenes at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week at Lincoln Center, solidifying Dayton's presence in national fashion conversations and establishing a credible launchpad for incubator talent.



THANK YOU

2013 Community Partners & Sponsors

SunWatch Indian Village
Pure Elegance Body Sculpting Day Spa
Cornerstone Project
Dayton Most Metro
Loan Star Pawn Shop
Bucyrus Land Holdings LLC
Sky Investments LLC
Singer Properties
Royce Real Estate LLC
Evans Motorworks
The Wright Cheesecake
The Dublin Pub
Lily's Bistro

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2013 Photography Team

Pete Bradow
Darren King Sr.
Reginald Worthen
Misti Leigh
Corry Lynn Patton
Mark McNeal
Lamar Pacley

2013 Collaborative Partners

Beauti Box
Shutter Eye Photo
Midwest Fashion Week
Industry Events
Audio Etc.
Creative Images
Circle of Vision Keepers Re-Entry and
Recovery Program
My Beauty is Priceless
Sons of Solomon Youth Empowerment
Seminars

Advisory Board (2013)

Berny Martin
Cindy Kirk Gabory
Ed Dixon
Maha Kashani
Kelechukwu Oparah

Featured Designers & Boutiques (2013)

Temiki Jewelry by Tegan King
B-Marie by Brenda Marone
Kerapa Klothng by Sonya Mills
Catou by Berny Martin
iii Creations by Misti Leigh
Debbie Teeters of Jolie
Shann Cortes
Laura Kirkpatrick
Nakeisha Maroney

2013 Leadership & Core Team

Owner/Director: Caressa L. Brown
Director of Logistics: Sybil Martin
Director of Public Relations: Sarah
Wacksmuth Tyrchniewicz
Director of Photography: Lamar Pacley
Director of Beauty: Lisa Scott
Director of Marketing: Culpatrice Foster
Director of Web Dev & Graphic Design:
Quincy Macklin
Assistant Graphic Designer: Stephanie
Caracappa
Model Coordinator: LaToya Stephens
Editor-in-Chief (DE-Flance): Leslie Heck
Administrative Executive: Danielle
Simpson
Director of Community Outreach:
Khadijah Ali
Accountant: Lori Adtkins Steele
Director of Communication: Dalisse
Humphrey

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