

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Dayton Emerging Fashion
Incubator (DE-FI) LLC

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Community Stakeholders,

As I reflect on 2014, I see a year of growth, not just for (DE-FI), but for me personally and professionally. It was a season of both discovery and resilience, one where the early success of our model development track made it clear that we were on to something special. From the moment our models began receiving offers from top agencies in New York and Chicago, Aube Jolicoeur, Lexi Henry, Keilah Jude, and so many others, it was evident that the Midwest was rich with untapped talent. We had proven that with the right visibility and guidance, individuals from our region could compete and succeed on the national stage.

But while the momentum was strong with our models, the road was less clear for our designers. I'll be honest, my own background was in modeling, and I quickly realized that supporting designers required a different level of industry knowledge, connections, and infrastructure. That's why 2014 was also a year of intensive learning. After being accepted into the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) programming, I had the unique opportunity to work behind the scenes at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week. There, I observed, absorbed, asked questions, and listened carefully. It became my classroom, a place where I could better understand the business of design, production, and branding so I could bring that knowledge back to Dayton and build something authentic and impactful.

We introduced A Taste of (DE-FI)ance, expanded our footprint with two major events, and deepened our commitment to making fashion accessible through business networking and hands-on experiences. Yet, life has a way of testing our mission. Just weeks after one of our biggest showcases in May, I was involved in a serious car accident that changed everything. It totaled my car, disrupted my ability to work, and sent me into 16 weeks of physical therapy. I had to shift from part-time work to full-time just to keep things afloat and to get another vehicle as the person who caused the accident fought to block me from receiving any compensation. The pressures of being a caregiver, a business owner, and a community builder collided all at once.

Despite the setbacks, we continued. We pressed forward because we knew this work mattered. We didn't have all the answers, but we had the drive, the relationships, and the belief that Dayton and the surrounding region deserve a fashion industry that reflects our creativity, talent, and determination.

This report tells the story of how (DE-FI) grew through challenge. It shows how we began laying the groundwork for a fashion ecosystem, one built not on hype or shortcuts, but on education, business acumen, and real-world experience. Thank you for believing in our vision and for continuing this journey with us.

In (DE-FI)ance of the status quo,

Caressa L. Brown
Owner/Director
(DE-FI) Global INC



BUSINESS REVIEW

Early 2014: (DE-FI) kicked off the new year with the inaugural A Taste of (DE-FI)ance where Fashion Meets Food in collaboration with Chef Anthony Head. Chef had worked one on one with designers to create customized appetizer that either aligned with the appearance of the design or the origin of the fabric used. This idea was shared with us by the leaders of Columbus based Alternative Fashion Mob. A sold out audience tasted the runway.

Our #FashionExperience in may was the sold out First Flight Now Fashion on May 10, 2014 at Commander Aero Airport .500+ attendees witnessed the successfully launched the career of Designer Aceani Michelle who was only 15 at the time; this event also featured a unique runway showcase with Erika Beartie featuring spoken word artist Jay Martinez. With Wright B flyer as the backdrop, (DE-FI) also hosted the Stylish mom runway featuring some of the most inspirational moms and their children and featured poetry by local poet Chris Wiley.

In February 2014 (DE-FI) Owner/ Director Caressa L. Brown, was invited back to NYC by the Council of Fashion Designers of America CFDA to work behind the scenes of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week and New York Fashion Week.

In July 2014 (DE-FI) celebrated our 1st anniversary a Habitat for Humanity Build in collaboration with the Circle of Vision Keepers Re-Entry and Recovery Program.

We also hosted in-depth mentor sessions and public events with over 250 attendees, highlighting Dayton's growing fashion enthusiasm



(DE-FI)

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE REVIEW

A Taste of (DE-FI)ance: Where Fashion Meets Food



SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE REVIEW

First Flight Now Fashion



THANK YOU

2014 Community Partners & Sponsors

SunWatch Indian Village
Cornerstone Project
Dayton Most Metro
Uptown Custom Paint
The Ohio Pain Clinic
BeautiControl by Sally Walters & Joan Hunt
ShoeDiva Boutique

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
Marianne Montgomery
Adeola Adeyemi
Maderas Beach Co. by Rebecca Huber
Bahar & Reza
Aceani Michelle & Team
Gowns by Beartie by Erika Berthy
Where's Melrose?
Local Love: A Roaming Boutique
Duece & Worthen
Misti Leigh
Corry Lynn Patton
Mark McNeal
Lamar Pacley

2014 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
Commander Aero
Wright B Museum
Wright Bros. USA
Alice's Wardrobe

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 Web Dev & Graphic Design: Quincy Macklin
Assistant Graphic Designer: Stephanie Caracappa
Model Coordinator: LaToya Stephens
Editor-in-Chief (DE-Flance): LaKeisha Grant
Administrative Executive: Danielle Simpson
Director of Community Outreach: Khadijah Ali
Accountant: Lori Adtkins Steele
Director of Communication: Dalisse Humphrey

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