

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Dayton Emerging Fashion
Incubator (DE-FI) LLC

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Supporters,

If 2017 was the year we found our voice, then 2018 was the year we learned the cost of using it.

Armed with a strategic plan, community support, and momentum from our previous work, 2018 began with intention. We were ready to execute, to activate our next chapter, and to deepen our impact. But what we didn't expect was just how deeply the status quo would resist progress.

Behind the scenes, we faced deliberate sabotage both subtle and overt. Doors that had once been open quietly closed. Small businesses and local entities that had previously welcomed collaboration now treated me like a stranger, even a threat. All over a comment that wasn't mine, a Facebook post that had nothing to do with me, or (DE-FI)...it was all over a Dixie Cup used to serve a drink at a locally owned upscale restaurant.

Two individuals I respected and had worked with found themselves in a public disagreement. When I refused to choose a side, when I tried to be the bridge, I was asked to sever ties, I declined. I chose unity and integrity over convenience and performance. And from that moment forward, a line was drawn. I was no longer seen as the "safe" choice. Stereotypes replaced support. Whispers replaced handshakes. Even those we had supported for years began to distance themselves.

To be clear, (DE-FI) has never been a part of the clique, and we never will be. 2018 became a year of true independence. Without the usual media coverage or public accolades, we pressed forward. We deepened our work. We re(DE-FI)ned our alliances. We kept building, not for applause, but for impact.

Because our mission isn't about popularity. It's about changing lives, creating opportunities, and (DE-FI)ng expectations in a region that too often limits its own possibilities. And the work doesn't stop just because the spotlight moves.

Thank you to everyone who stayed the course with us. Your continued support fuels our movement. And to those watching from a distance, the work continues, whether you support it or not.

In (DE-FI)ance,
Caressa L. Brown
Owner/Director
Dayton Emerging Fashion Incubator
(DE-FI) LLC

(DE-FI)

2018 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

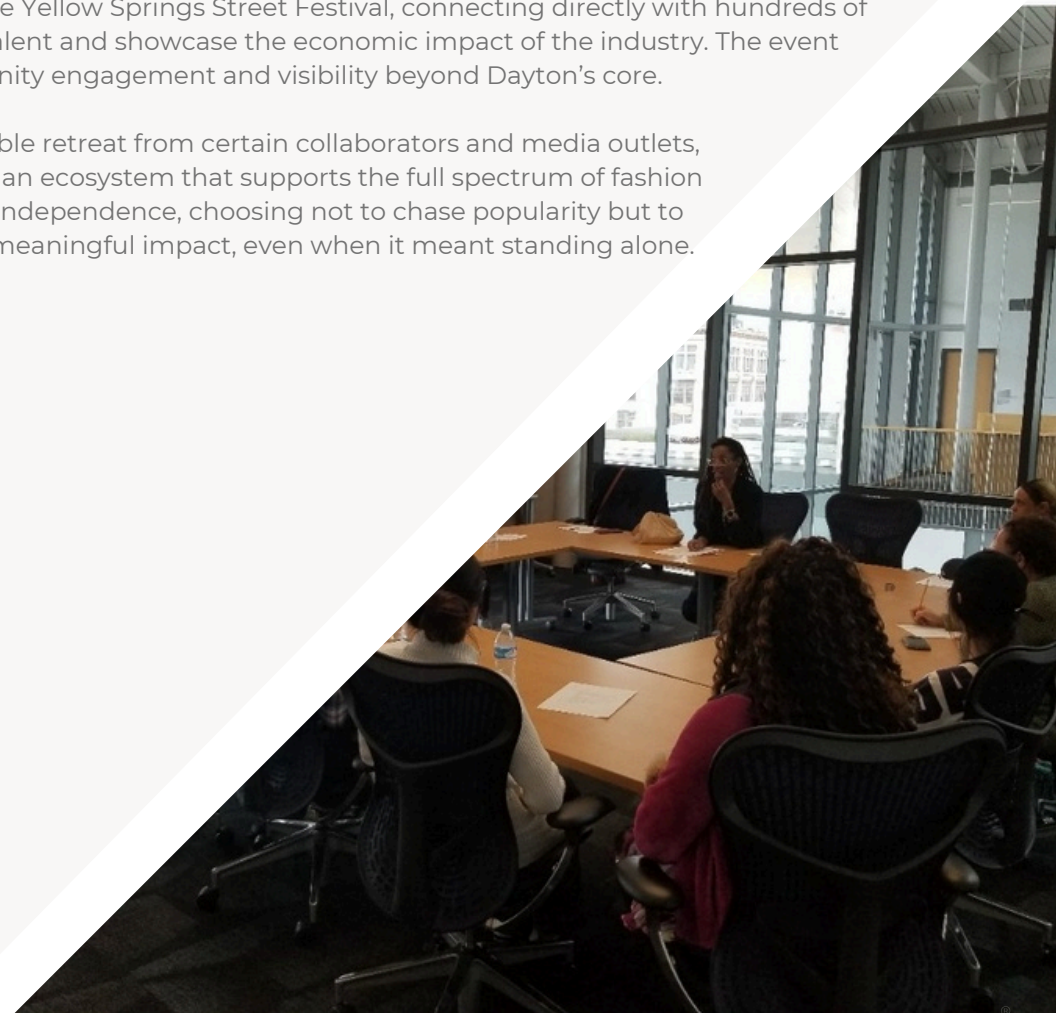
In 2018, the Dayton Emerging Fashion Incubator (DE-FI) continued executing its strategic plan with a focus on applying hard-earned experience and elevating programming at a pace and scale rooted in authenticity and sustainability. While external challenges emerged, including increasing resistance from local gatekeepers and intentional attempts to undermine progress, (DE-FI) maintained its mission with integrity and innovation.

(DE-FI) returned for a second year as an exhibitor at the Makers Fair at Carillon Historical Park, engaging families and fashion enthusiasts with hands-on educational activities and showcasing the intersection of heritage, craft, and contemporary design. Models from the incubator were taken to Chicago for the seventh consecutive year for professional development, agency meetings, and exposure to new markets, reinforcing (DE-FI)'s consistent commitment to talent mobility.

In a bold display of cross-disciplinary storytelling, the team released (DE-FI)ance Magazine; the publication reflected years of applied learning and demonstrated the incubator's capability to amplify fashion narratives through editorial media.

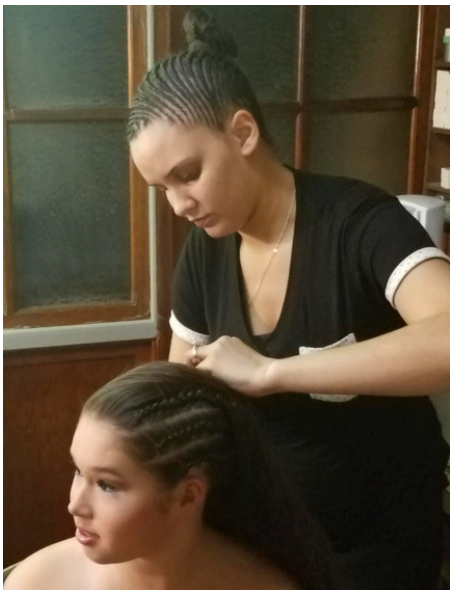
In 2018, we participated as a vendor at the Yellow Springs Street Festival, connecting directly with hundreds of attendees to promote regional fashion talent and showcase the economic impact of the industry. The event provided a valuable platform for community engagement and visibility beyond Dayton's core.

Despite a shifting local climate and a visible retreat from certain collaborators and media outlets, (DE-FI) remained committed to building an ecosystem that supports the full spectrum of fashion careers. The organization leaned into its independence, choosing not to chase popularity but to anchor in purpose...continuing to foster meaningful impact, even when it meant standing alone.



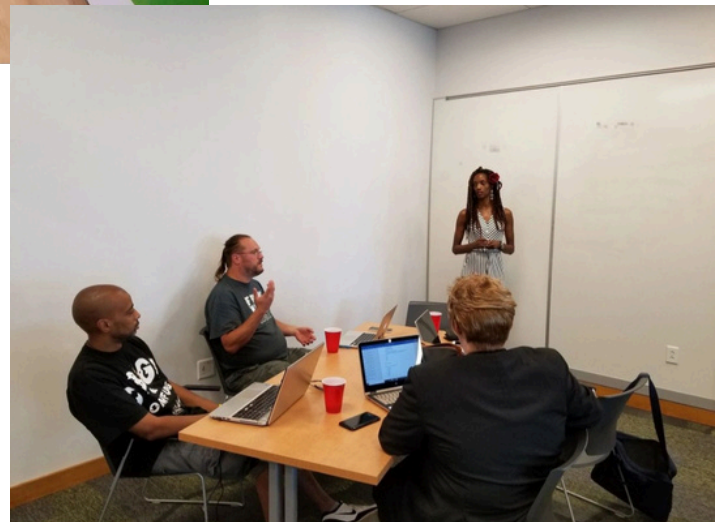
THE 2018 EXPERIENCES

(DE-FI)[®]



2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

(DE-FI)[®]



THANK YOU

2018 Photography Team

Pete Bradow
John Flynn
Misti Leigh
Lamar Pacley
Chris Kuettner

Advisory Board (2018)

Cindy Kirk Gabory
Ed Dixon
Mohammad Al-Qirawbe

2018 Collaborative Partners

Shutter Eye Photo
Industry Events
Audio Etc.
Creative Images
Circle of Vision Keepers Re-Entry and
Recovery Program
Cloverstorm photography
Edward A. Dixon Gallery

2018 Leadership & Core Team

Owner/Director: Caressa L. Brown
Director of Logistics: Sybil Martin
Director of Photography: Lamar Pacley
Director of Web Dev & Graphic Design:
Jason Penix
Director of Beauty: ShaTerra Jenkins
Model Coordinator: LaToya Stephens
Administrative Executive: Danielle
Simpson
Director of Community Outreach:
Khadijah Ali
Accountant: Lori Adtkins Steele
Director of Communication: Dalisse
Humphrey

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