



RIGHT TO BEAR THREADS

Bear Threads, Inc. is a community development project committed to allowing children to make positive change in their communities through the creation of wearable art. Through an introduction of basic fashion principles, young people are encouraged to design articles of clothing that represent an issue in their community that they would like to bring awareness to. Proceeds from the sale of these articles of clothing are funneled back into community through donations to existing community organizations. Therefore, the creation of shirts, bracelets, purses, hats and shoes become a form of artistic activism that allow young people to feel empowered to make a statement, as well as tangibly contribute to the development of their neighborhood. As our country grapples with issues of gun violence, racial inequality and a lack of female empowerment, Bear Threads aspires to awaken youth to their power as active agents of change.

MIKAILA BROWN, PHD
WWW. TCTPROJECT.COM
FACEBOOK/IG - @TCTPROJECT

Mission:

A fashion-centered program committed to producing significant works of socially conscious clothes, Bear Threads' objectives are threefold:

1. Use the contemporary fashion-making process to develop self-awareness, leadership, critical-thinking, creative problem solving and conceptual skills for youth participants
2. Contribute to the social wellbeing and cultural life of the communities in which this program is operated
3. Raise awareness to the societal issues plaguing the minds of our youths; as well as give them constructive means to do something about it

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Under the leadership of Founder & Executive Director, Mikaila Brown, Bear Threads encourages projects to include identifying a community need through the use of Problem Based Learning (PBL) strategies.

This pedagogic approach not only enhances content knowledge, but also fosters the development of communication, problem-solving, and self-directed learning skills. It is the intention of the project to use PBL as a strategy to help young people identify and address issues in their communities. Youth participants will select one issue that they wish to see recognized by a broader audience than their local community. They will then create one piece of wearable art that will represent this issue.

These articles of clothing will be sold on a designated Bear Threads webpage, the proceeds of which will be donated to a nonprofit organization currently addressing the societal issue identified by the youth participants. Besides these practical solutions, there are many positive outcomes for all involved. The perspectives and insights of young people have a tremendous amount to offer their communities and we are interested in seeing what happens when their voices are heard.

Bear Threads is designed in a non-hierarchical fashion to foster real cooperation. Our objective is that everyone involved comes away from our events having been both leaders and participants. Ultimately, we believe that this process has the potential to create truly innovative and significant new works of fashion art that will gain meaning and importance having been made by these otherwise unlikely young designers.

Who:

Youth Participants

1 Designated Bear Threads Project Manager (Mikaila Brown, PhD)

1 Artist Assistant per 5 students

Supplies:

Each student will need to bring a new, plain white or black t-shirt to decorate the day of the activity.

Project Timeline:

12:00pm-12:30pm: Youth & Parent Orientation / Intro to Fashion Anthropology

12:30pm-1:30pm: Selection of Featured Societal Issue

1:30pm-2:30pm: Product Creation

2:30pm-3:00pm: Product Presentation & Runway Show

2 Month after Project is Completed: Presentation of Proceeds to Organization of the Student Participants' Choice



About Our Executive Director:

Mikaila Brown has a doctorate in Anthropology and Education from Columbia University and over 10 years work experience with domestic and international non-profits. During these years of working as a consultant, she honed the skill of identifying the needs of a particular community and aligning them with the services provided by their local agencies. She applied these same skills when she left the nonprofit sector to pursue a lifelong dream of launching a socially conscious fashion line in 2011. Most recently, she has further integrated her anthropological background and fashion experience to create The Common Thread Project, which highlights cultural diversities within the fashion industry by investigating the style trends of local communities. Bear Threads adds her background in nonprofit management back into the mix, and provides a platform for her to empower young people to think more critically about the connections between fashion, community and culture.