

A Passion for Fashion!

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Mentorship Invitation

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What IS a Passion for Fashion?

Born out of a partnership between two cutting-edge organizations, A Passion for Fashion! marries YES' expertise in youth entrepreneurship with TFI's expertise in incubating new fashion designers. This exciting program gives aspiring young fashion designers the opportunity to explore the world of entrepreneurship in the fashion industry at no cost.

Through a series of workshops, participants will learn the process of starting their own business — receiving instruction in fashion design and marketing as well as business skills training. In addition to the workshops and gaining exposure to the industry, A Passion for Fashion! participants will have access to mentorship from industry professionals. The program concludes with the exciting Fashionista's Den competition!



WHO are we serving?

A Passion for Fashion! is focused on serving youth from the GTA between the ages of 16 to 29. YES and TFI have made it a top priority to reach out to youth who are not traditionally exposed to or engaged in networks and support systems that foster entrepreneurship and meaningful employment. A Passion for Fashion! has been heavily marketed towards youth in Toronto's 13 priority neighbourhoods in order to help diminish the barrier youth in these areas may face towards entrepreneurship programs and training.

The “Fashionista’s Den” Competition

Inspired by the hit CBC television show, The Dragon's Den, the Fashionista's Den will give twenty participants the opportunity to pitch their fashion business idea to a panel of expert judges. Eligible participants will have completed all six program workshops and submitted a business plan and “fashion presentation board” to the judges. Participants will be judged on the viability of their business plan as well as the quality of their pitch and “fashion presentation board”. YES and TFI will also consider participants' backgrounds and their need for the program when selecting the winner. The winner will be announced at a high-profile reception and will receive \$1000, a one-year free TFI membership and 50 hours of business advisory and fashion mentorship — a prize package valued at over \$10,000.

What does mentorship mean?

It is important to understand the necessity of mentors in today's society. Mentoring is defined as a sustained, close developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual with a younger person. The goal is to build character and competence on the part of the mentee. Studies have shown that adults who gain the trust of youth through interaction and time can have a great influence on their lives. Mentoring a young person provides an opportunity for the free exchange of business/career skills training and support. Mentoring is usually focussed around a long-term goal and often career based.

Why become a mentor now?

Parents have historically been the central source of emotional, financial and social support for children. Some youth are fortunate enough to be part of expanded networks that include grandparents, extended family, neighbours, community and religious organizations. This adult network offers youth the affection, guidance and sense of direction they need.

Family, community and civic life in our society are changing rapidly. Fewer people know their neighbours. Time constraints and financial pressures facing working families and single parents often sever traditional community ties. Non-parental adult resources have become increasingly more difficult for young people to access. These families are often totally isolated from the community. As a result, youth with the greatest need of help are those least likely to receive it.

That's where mentorship programs become important. Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the American Youth Policy Foundation and PEPNET (Promising Effective Practices Network) report that volunteer mentoring has been extremely successful with at-risk youth in areas such as:

- ◆ reintegration into society
- ◆ career development strategies
- ◆ skills training
- ◆ finding and maintaining employment
- ◆ on-the-job training
- ◆ returning to school

These reports also stress the importance of coordinating mentorship programs with ongoing community support programs. In addition, when mentoring is built around a long term goal such as a career, it creates an environment where a mentee can concentrate on the positive aspects of their life rather than on negative influences such as substance abuse or crime which they may be trying to overcome.

A Passion for Fashion Mentor Job Description

Objective: To provide encouragement, support, guidance and share experiences that will assist your Passion for Fashion mentee in starting their business within the fashion industry.

Mentee Pairing: Mentors will receive one to three mentees. Matches will be made based on the needs of the mentee and the skill sets and experience of the mentor.

Length of Mentorship Program: Begins December 2nd 2009 and Continues until March 2nd 2009.

Time Commitment: 5 to 10 hours of one-on-one time within a 3 month period starting December 2nd 2009. Communication with mentees can occur in person, over the phone or by email. However, mentorship is most effective when face-to-face contact is involved. We are therefore requesting that mentors meet with their mentees in person at least once.

In addition to the 5 to 10 hours of one-to-one mentoring time, mentors are also asked to attend a two-hour Mentor-Mentee Orientation Night taking place Wednesday, December 2nd from 5:30 to 7:30pm.

What is expected of you as a Mentor?

- Share your career experiences and lessons learned.
- Encourage and support mentees in their pursuit of their career goals.
- Provide career and business advice and/or creative direction grounded in your experience and area of expertise.
- Provide helpful feedback on the mentees' submission for the Fashionista's Den Competition.
- Promote independence, self-confidence and self-sufficiency amongst mentees.
- Lend advice based on your strengths and skill sets.

What is *not* expected of you as a mentor?

- This program is not intended to replace necessary professional services by providing free legal, accounting, marketing or any other professional consulting services.

Contact Info

For more information or to sign-up as a mentor, please contact the Passion for Fashion Program Coordinator, Gabrielle Zilkha, at 416-504-5516 ext. 233 or gabrielle_zilkha@yes.on.ca.