

Local teen wins Value Village Redesigner contest

Charity Prater

It was the beginning of summer break, in mid June, when Molly Kiss, now 17, sat in her cozy Laurelhurst home surfing Craigslist.org for a part-time job.

While casually browsing, an interesting ad tempted her fashion instincts. The ad was for Value Village Redesigners, teens who had the ability to select thrift clothes and turn them into trendy new outfits.

"Well, I might as well give it a try," Molly said to herself.

She filled out the detailed application, describing her four-year interest in fashion, her appreciation for the lively variety of styles worn by such celebrities as Christina Aguilera, and her distaste for the bland, forgettable styles worn by others. She attached a head shot and thought little more of it.

Two weeks later, she received a phone

call from Value Village representatives informing her that she was one of ten finalists to be chosen as a teen fashion redesigner for the thrift chain. One phone interview later and she was chosen as one of six to be sent on an all-expense-paid trip to Seattle to tour three different Value Village stores and create six unique outfits for the chain's annual fashion photo shoot.

"I was super shocked!" Molly says. "I never see myself winning these types of things."

Molly has been a fashion guru since the age of 13. Her interest came from reading fashion magazines such as *Seventeen* and *Teen Vogue*. She also attended a fashion illustration class at Portland Community College.

In July, Molly and her mother, Lynn Lustberg, set out for Seattle and four days of exploring Value Village stores with other teens. Six fad outfits were chosen by the teens and then taken back to a hotel room where they playfully manipulated the items with scissors and sequins. Molly's most prized discovery was a black beret made of soft sweater-like material. Other treasures

she's collected included sparkly belts and purses, flowery shoes and shimmering shirts.

"It was so cool to hang out and talk about fashion with other teens," Molly says, smiling. "We still keep in touch today."

In addition to making new friends Molly met professionals in the fashion industry, including a fashion stylist, someone who helps people organize and redesign their wardrobe. Meeting and hearing from an expert has given Molly the confidence and inspiration to pursue a career in the fashion industry.

Since the event, Molly has begun volunteering for Dress for Success, a local company that supports people who want to get involved in the corporate world but don't have the professional clothes needed for an interview. Two to three days a week, Molly helps people pick out clothing and accessories.

"It's so nice to see a new confidence in

people who are impressed with how they look, and they are always so thankful," Molly says.

Currently, Molly is a senior year at Central Catholic High School. When she graduates she plans to study business at the University of San Francisco and eventually have a career as a trend analyst, informing buyers of the hottest new trends in fashion. Her family and friends know her fashion style as feminine

and sophisticated. Molly loves to flaunt lace and layers in her work, along with accessories to make her outfit stand out, using dangly earrings or an eye-catching belt.

When heading out on a shopping trip she always hits the Hollywood Value Village Store first where she can easily put an outfit together for \$30. "Shoes included," Molly says.

She's proud of having a style that makes her unique. Her goals for the future include using her exclusive taste to improve the confidence of others, while having a great time doing it. ★



Molly Kiss in the Hollywood Value Village Store (4420 N.E. Hancock St.) where she enjoys hunting for frugal fashion. - Photo by Charity Prater