

Kramer is runner-up in recycled fashion show

Written by Jes-c Brandt

It all started when Josi Kramer was still in Jr. High. She started collecting silver gum wrappers in hope of breaking a world record. Many from her class still remember handing over gum wrappers by the package, joining in the excitement.

In two years, Kramer had amassed 10,000 gum wrappers, the number needed to earn her position in the Guinness Book of World Records. Unfortunately, Kramer's record was never acknowledged, and most simply forgot about the wrappers.

Of course, Kramer couldn't just forget about an undertaking she'd invested so much time in. This year, 1,500 gum wrappers were removed from the collection and used to create a dress. It was inspired, she said, by the gum wrapper chains she made as a child.

As a Fashion Design and Merchandising major at Colorado State University, Kramer is no stranger to designing and creating clothing. Taking classes at CSU has required her to make a number of items including jackets, pants, skirts and tops. The gum wrapper dress, however, was the first of its kind.

Kramer's gum wrapper dress was created to be shown in the CSU chapter of Fashion Group International's Recycled Fashion Show. The Recycled Fashion Show is an annual event held by the chapter in response to the recession.

Multiple categories made up the fashion show, but the category Kramer participated in required the clothes be made of recycled materials. Her shimmering gum wrapper dress earned her the runner-up title.

Other unique outfits were made from zippers, drapes, plastic cups and seatbelts, said Kramer's mother Kim who attended the fashion show with her husband Byron. Kramer's sister Kylee Gustafson was there to support her as well. Also attending was Briana Lebsack, who modeled the gum wrapper dress, and her mother Brenda.

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In the last year, Kramer has been immersing herself in fashion anywhere she can find it. As a part of fashion group international, Kramer meets weekly with other members to discuss fashion shows and showcases in the Denver and Fort Collins area. Members also have the opportunity to work behind the scenes at fashion shows, usually helping dress the models.

This summer Kramer is in Dublin, Ireland for an internship at Brown Thomas, an up scale department store exclusive to Ireland. There she works in the buying department where they go to showrooms to pick the pieces they want to put in the store.

Kramer is learning a lot about the process of choosing which items will sell based on style and past sales. The experience, Kramer feels, will help her create designs that have more potential to attract buyers.

Entering her third year at CSU this fall, Kramer looks forward to drawing classes that allow her to be more creative with her designs. For Kramer, the thrill of seeing a piece constructed from start to finish will never disappear.