

Student designs T-shirt in effort against domestic violence

JILLIAN DALEY Statesman Journal
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Stephens Middle School eighth-grader Alexis Blomgren's T-shirt is far from ordinary.

Her design "grabs at your heart" and could help change lives, said her industrial arts technology teacher, Kimberly Garlock.

Alexis' design is more than heart-touching, it's the winning entry of a contest called Project Change Reaction, a program meant to raise awareness about domestic violence.

For Project Change Reaction, 60 Stephens seventh- and eighth-graders in Garlock's graphics design class were asked to create a T-shirt with a domestic violence awareness theme for Break the Chain Apparel: Clothing with a Voice clothing line.

Students created the slogan "Sticks and Stones may Break my Bones, but Sometimes Words are Worse" to focus on verbal abuse for the domestic violence theme for the T-shirts.

The plan is to present the T-shirts Jan. 16 at a school assembly to which the governor and Salem mayor have been invited.

Blomgren's "design was like a rag doll, and the rag doll had been pulled apart and stitched back up, and it had a broken heart," Garlock said.

Family trouble and a breakup with a boyfriend inspired the art, Alexis said.

"You've been put together after being torn apart on the inside, basically is what it means," Alexis said.

In addition to raising awareness about domestic violence, the T-shirts will be sold as a fundraiser for an area charity or nonprofit group, one of those that Burns' clothing line already supports, Garlock said. Students haven't selected a group yet.

T-shirts likely will be marked at \$18, maybe less, and students will sell the 200 shirts to relatives and friends, Garlock said.

Garlock and Break the Chain chief executive officer Tammi Burns came up with the idea for Project Change Reaction one day when they were talking.

"It was one of those oh-my-gosh moments when you're just thinking about something, and it just pops in your head, and you think how could we do this?" Burns said.



Alexis

Learn more

For more information on Break the Chain Apparel or Project Change Reaction, go to www.breakthechainapparel.com or call (503) 859-5555.

Domestic violence resource

If you know someone who could be suffering from domestic violence or are suffering yourself, call the Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service's 24-hour hotline at 1 (866) 399-7722, write them at info@mvwcs.com, or go to www.mvwcs.com.

Burns, a domestic violence survivor, founded her clothing line in 2006 to raise awareness about domestic violence, drug abuse and other issues. Her line is sold on the Web and at area stores such as Retreat Salon in Southeast Salem.

Regis High School in Stayton also is doing its own Project Change Reaction, and other schools are welcome to copy the idea, Burns said.

"Our youth are our future, and we need to teach them that they have a voice and what they say is important," Burns said.

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