



West Valley VIEW

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College fashion club glowing

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MODELS PRACTICE before a fashion show at Estrella Mountain Community College Wednesday. (Below) Jose Rios, founder of the fashion club at the college, helps to prepare glow sticks for the models for a glow-in-the-dark show.



Jose Rios loves to create things and take on challenges, whether it be with fabric, flowers or glow sticks.

The founder of Estrella Mountain Community College's fashion club has been inspiring fashion shows on campus for two years.

"It's challenging to work with something that has a limited life span, like plants or glow sticks," Rios said.

The 18 members of the fashion club have done just that. They put on their first glow-in-the-dark fashion show Wednesday as part of the college's arts extravaganza, Artistry Unveiled.

Rios founded the fashion club at Estrella two years ago to foster creativity on campus, he said.

"There was a group of students in my circle of friends looking to get fashion degrees," he said. "We wanted to do something to help nurture what people want to do."

The club doesn't have traditional offices such as president and secretary. It has a head designer, runway director, creative director and cosmetics director.

Although the college does not offer a degree in fashion design, the club is officially sanctioned. The college is offering its first course on the subject this fall: fashion history.

Rios, a Goodyear resident, goes to school full time and works on the Avondale campus. As a child, he spent countless hours in his grandmother's bridal shop, he said.

"I grew up alongside my grandmother's sewing machine. It's been a part of my whole life," he said.

While fashion seems to be in his blood, working on special events has fostered another love. Rios is working toward a communications degree.

"I want to be an events coordinator," he said. "This group has helped me a lot in my career path."

Creating fashion shows gives him an adrenaline rush, Rios said. The end result is the product of the club working together and the students working in collaboration with other groups and faculty members.

"It's really been the students pushing these type of events," said Christina Izaguirre, student life and leadership program specialist. "I tell students, whatever ideas you have, it's endless; we will support whatever we can."

The experience of creating an event from beginning to end is as valuable as classroom learning, Rios said.

"This is a way to get hands-on education," he said.

The fashion club has more than tripled in size since it started. Events have been well-attended and arts programs on the campus are on the rise.

"I think it's really good," Izaguirre said. "We have a collaboration between the students, the organizations and faculty on campus."

Rios said it often feels like he lives on campus, between classes, work and club activities. It's all worth it at the end of an event, though, he said.

"That's the best feeling - to walk out in the end of a show and everyone's clapping," Rios said. "It makes you feel your vision and creativity has a place in this world."

Beth Kristin Ott can be reached by e-mail at bott@westvalleyview.com.

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