

## An organic approach to clothes (Albany County, Colonie, Latham, Loudonville) IN COLONIE SPOTLIGHT

Posted on: 09/15/09

Ariana Cohn, Reporter

email: [cohna@spotlightnews.com](mailto:cohna@spotlightnews.com)



Runway 7 owner Susan Bonneau celebrated the grand opening of the store with her friends and family. Ariana Cohn/Spotlight

When Susan Bonneau was diagnosed with Lupus in 2005, an auto-immune disease that can leave a person weak and sensitive to most things their skin touches, she had no idea to what degree her body would reject things from the outside world.

Everything right down to the undergarments she wore irritated her skin and body, leaving her to wonder, if she could not comfortably wear clothing, what would she do?

She began researching the clothing she was accustomed to wearing and what she found shocked her, she said.

"Everything we put on our bodies is absorbed," the Averill Park resident said, explaining that many garments are designed and created in the midst of many chemicals and toxins. "I think that's why auto-immune diseases are on the rise."

Bonneau said those suffering from lupus become almost allergic to the sun, and the outer protection they wear becomes a key factor in their safety and health.

After realizing all of the toxins she was putting on her body with the clothing she was wearing, Bonneau began looking for a cleaner, greener option. She began researching organic clothing and the benefits to wearing organic clothes.

For instance, clothes made from bamboo are especially helpful for those who suffer from diabetes, she said, because the bamboo fabric helps keep the body cool. T-shirts made from organic cotton provide most of the same feel and texture of a typical T-shirt, but without any chemicals or toxins used in the process of their production.

Bonneau learned all about organic clothing, but said she was disheartened to learn that unlike most clothing, she could not go into a store and try the organic items on. They were only available over the Internet, and often she would order a product, try it on at home, and be displeased with it.

So, she decided to open her own store after seeing the need for something local that offered organic clothing for not only people with her condition, but other skin conditions as well.

"Maybe this is an opportunity to help other people like me," she said.

Her store was named Runway 7 by her 12-year-old daughter, Sara Craft, because of its location on Route 7, near the Albany International Airport, and its fashion-forward approach to healthy and comfortable clothing. It is located in the Peter Harris Plaza.

Bonneau celebrated a private grand opening with friends on Thursday, Sept. 3. An official grand opening was held on Saturday, Sept. 5.

Tom Nolte, president of the Colonie Chamber of Commerce, was at the private grand opening for Runway 7.

"This is the good news that people need to see," Nolte said. In a time of fierce competition, Nolte said it is great that unique businesses such as Runway 7 can open and have the potential to do well.

He also said, "This has been a learning experience," in regards to Bonneau's cause and the store's mission since many people might not know about the particular issues that affect those with lupus and other diseases in which the clothing they wear truly matters.

In addition to selling eco-friendly clothing for both men and women, the store also sells locally made jewelry, vegan footwear, accessories, undergarments and socks.

Bonneau plans to donate 5 percent of all proceeds from UV protective clothing to the Lupus Alliance of Upstate New York.

The store is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The first 500 customers to spend \$50 or more will receive either a reusable cotton organic tote bag or an organic T-shirt while supplies last. For information, e-mail Bonneau at [sbonneau@runway7ecofashions.com](mailto:sbonneau@runway7ecofashions.com).

You can contact [cohna@spotlightnews.com](mailto:cohna@spotlightnews.com) with any questions. Also, feel free to post comments below.