

News Summary



ATTENTION:

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YWCA San Diego

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Former local's fashions to be showcased at San Diego Women's Week

By Elizabeth Marie Himchak

A 27-year-old woman who grew up in Poway and is making a name for herself in the fashion industry will be among the notable names participating in the second annual San Diego Women's Week.

The March 30 to April 2 event at the California Center for the Arts Escondido is organized by San Diego North Chamber of Commerce.

Fashion designer, model and actress Lauren Elaine — whom locals might remember as Lauren Elaine Edleson — said her fall/winter 2011 line, along with some of this spring's fashions, will be showcased at the 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, April 1 fashion show luncheon.

"A majority will be cocktail dresses and evening wear, so in San Diego they can really be worn all year round," Edleson said.

Because designers typically showcase their work six months in advance of the season, Edleson said her fall/winter line will debut on March 14 during LA Fashion Week.

Her designs, which Edleson described as vintage inspired and feminine, are targeted at females 15 to 50 years. She said they are especially popular among younger demographics and have caught the eyes of "young Hollywood."

Among those who have been seen in her designs, she said, are Chelsea Kane, a Disney Channel actress just cast in the 12th season of "Dancing with the Stars." Another is fellow Powegian Emma Baker, 2010 Miss California Teen USA. Other actresses are Lisa Edelstein on "House" and Sasha Pieterse on "Pretty Little Liars."

Edleson, whose family moved to Poway from Scripps Ranch when she was in fifth grade, said she attended Tierra Bonita Elementary, Twin Peaks Middle School and graduated in 2002 from Poway High. Her parents are Poway residents Karon and Chip Edleson.

According to Edleson's online bio, her interest in fashion began at age 6, when her mother enrolled her in a sewing class. By 13, she began modeling, which she continued throughout high school and college. Her modeling assignments included Teen and Seventeen magazines, Chanel and Nordstrom.



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PHOTO BY STEVEN LT SMITH



Lauren Elaine, left, with model Hannah Landberg. Both are wearing Lauren Elaine designs.

While completing her bachelor's degree in film production at the University of Texas, Edleson began acting. Roles included "Becky" in Dierks Bentley's music videos and being cast in films "The Ringer" and "Sin City."

In college she also started a fashion design career, and she pursues all three — modeling, acting and fashion design — in Los Angeles, where she now lives. Fashion design is her main career, she said.

Her Lauren Elaine brand debuted in March 2008 during LA Fashion Week, which includes the "Black Label" couture, "Black Label Swim" and "Laine by Lauren Elaine" environmentally-friendly lines. Her designs, which have been featured in Vogue and Women's Wear Daily, are sold in boutiques, including some in San Diego County. For retailers, go to www.Lauren-ElaineDesigns.com.

This will be Edleson's second appearance at San Diego Women's Week. She decided to participate due to her association with SDNCC President and CEO Debra Rosen, who has known her for years and recruited her for Escondido Women's Week a few years back, where Edleson showcased her first collection, she said.

As for San Diego Women's Week, Edleson said, "It's a great cause and really empowering." Last year she spoke about how to get into fashion and modeling careers, which she said hopefully "inspired young girls."

Participating in this year's benefit fashion show luncheon, she said, "is a cool opportunity to showcase my work in my hometown."

Edleson said last year she listened to many of the speakers throughout the week, whom she called "amazing."

As for advice Edleson said she would



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Former Powegian Lauren Elaine Edleson (known professionally as Lauren Elaine).

give teen girls with dreams of modeling, acting or fashion industry careers, "It's most important ... to have a thick skin, know who you are and stay true to yourself. They are some of the most competitive industries in the world and you have to be prepared to take rejection and criticism."

To break into fashion design, Edleson said, "You have to have a strong vision and enjoy being creative. You can do really well if you stay true to that."

Rosen said about 50 percent of tickets to San Diego Women's Week were sold as of March 2. She said 1,500 could be accommodated at each of the Wednesday, March 30; Thursday, March 31; and Friday, April 1 evening sessions, slated for 5:30-9 p.m. Tickets to each are \$25.

The Friday luncheon featuring Edleson's designs is open to 450 attendees, who are asked to bring professional women's outfits (that have been cleaned) for donation to Becky's House. The YWCA program helps women and their children who are rebuilding their lives after escaping domestic violence. Rosen said the clothes will help women trying to start or restart their careers. The show and luncheon ticket price is \$49.

The Saturday, April 2 session will go from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Its ticket is \$59 (includes lunch).

An all-week pass is also available for \$149.

Throughout the week, speakers will address topics of interest to women of all ages, including careers, health, fitness and societal issues. Rosen said they will also meet attendees in the exhibit hall.

For a speakers schedule and to purchase tickets, go to www.sdwomensweek.com or call 858-487-1767. All events will be at the California Center for the Arts Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd.