



QUALITIES OF LIFE

WHO/WHAT/WEAR**Chicago's own
'Project Runway'**

Kate Coxworth was working for Ralph Lauren in New York when she heard about Mayor Richard M. Daley's efforts to nourish the fashion industry back home.

"It was the right time to come back," she said.

In 2006 in Chicago, she launched Kate Boggiano, a line of made-in-the-USA tailored women's shirts, both off the rack and custom.

Rewarding her return, she recently was selected for the Chicago Fashion Incubator, a joint program of the city and of Macy's, providing a yearlong residency and mentorship for six emerging designers at Macy's State Street store.

"We're a young business. Here, we'll be surrounded by experts," Coxworth said at the recent unveiling of the incubator on the 11th floor of Macy's.

Three sun-drenched rooms with peeks of Lake Michigan provide work space for the designers, just a short jaunt from the fashion schools where some of them find eager interns. What once was a telephone operators' center was converted into a sample room worthy of "Project Runway," equipped with Singer and Juki sewing machines.

"The incubator is another important step to keeping talented designers—I call them artists—right here in Chicago," Daley said at the launch event Monday, attended by the six designers, including Yana German (YANA Collection), Agga Raya (AGGA B), Glenn Mallory (6ACE), Lidia Wachowska (Evil Kitty), and Kristin Rosynek Hassan (OrganiK Revolution).

"It is my hope that we will launch out of this building someone equal to Ralph Lauren or Donna Karan," said Macy's spokesman Ralph Hughes.

For more details about Chicago fashion, see chicagofashionresource.com.