



**For Immediate Release**  
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## Media Release

### **SOA hosts annual fashion show**

**Charleston County School of  
the Arts**

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Principal

**North Charleston, SC** – Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) Fashion and Design students have been preparing all year for their [8<sup>th</sup> Annual Fashion Show](#). The SOA Fashion Show is an exciting event, complete with runway, lights, music, and creative energy. The show traditionally draws 750 guests and is the primary source for fundraising for the program.

Changes have been added to this year's performance, including a virtual option is available for the general public. Special thanks to Citadel Mall, which donated the space for filming.

The VIP Premiere Night will be May 21, 2021. Additional shows will be held May 27 and 28, 2021. All shows will run from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and will be virtual. Ticket holders to virtual shows will receive viewing instructions and times. To purchase tickets, visit the Fashion and Design Department's [website](#). VIP tickets are limited to families (immediate family members and premier sponsors of the show). Sponsorships are also available and can be found on the website.

The Fashion and Design program is a Career and Technology Education honors program where students learn the foundations of design. In this multidisciplinary major, students design and construct costumes for SOA's musicals, learn figure drawing, garment construction, couture sewing, 3D fabric draping, and working with flat pattern design. Other career elements include fashion sales/marketing, exploring the costume and fashion design industries as well as planning and producing the annual fashion show and concluding with creating a digital portfolio of their work.

"We are immensely proud of our Fashion and Design students and can't wait to see the garments they've created for this year's event," said Principal Dr. Shannon Cook. "From conception to fittings, they bring their unique perspectives to life on their peers who fill the runways and model how a vision can become a reality."

Each year, students are given a theme that provides the foundation of their collections. Students work year-round creating garments in preparation for the show.

According to the program's instructor, Kelly Martin, all garments have been completed, and 130 models have been secured for the show. The fashion show represents the work of all grade levels. This year's theme is "Overlooked," which references people in history who have done something remarkable but have never been recognized for it. For example, an African American designer, Zelda Wynn Valdes, developed the bunny costume for Playboy, but Hugh Hefner got all the credit for it.

Senior Abby Benton chose to showcase Valdes.

"Zelda fit the designs to who she was making it for," said Benton. "She was very body inclusive. She was not afraid to break away from using the standard size zero model. Like Zelda, my designs reflect the diverse body types of this generation."

"Students spent countless hours hand embroidering and hand sewing these garments with immense amounts of detail," said Martin. "One student spent 40 hours patching together a patchwork pattern for her work for one garment. Another hand embroidered and sewed embellishments on several of her garments. People eat, sleep and breathe their collection."

Attendees can expect to see anywhere between two to eight garments per designer, depending on the student's grade level and skill.

Instructor Martin is an industry veteran and is proud of what the program offers students. She is a former designer out of the San Francisco Bay Area. This is her first year at SOA. She moved back to Charleston during the pandemic and learned about the job.

"I was surprised by how much I enjoy it," said Martin. "I've taught adults before but never at the high school level. This is a total career shift for me, but I love it. It is so exciting to help these designers realize the ideas in their heads in a tactile, three-dimensional format. It is invigorating to be a part of their futures."

Special guests will attend the premiere, including City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg and his wife Sandy and City of North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey. Also, local fashion stylist influencer Andrea Serrano will be on hand as the emcee. She will conduct "red carpet interviews" with the seniors.

"I am excited about the opportunity to feature our fashion show in a virtual format for the first time," said Martin. "It's an opportunity to create a production in a different format, and we've carefully taken the time to curate something that is going to be very spectacular and present our department in a way that truly highlights our capabilities. It is important because it gives our designers opportunities to walk through the real-life experiences of putting on a fashion show. This will show our students they can create something magical if they are dedicated and apply themselves."

Martin said it is the perfect avenue to demonstrate their work as they invest in their life, career, and future.

"We hope the public will help support our program, especially when we don't have the physical capacity to draw people to a single fashion show due to COVID-19," said Martin. "This year's show offers lots opportunities to see it, and we are very dependent on this fundraising effort to keep the program alive."

For more information, please contact Principal Cook at (843) 529-4990. To purchase tickets, visit the [website](#).

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.