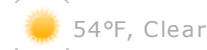


Newark, DE Weather



Student jewelry line featured in local boutique

By [Jenna DeAngelis](#) and [Collette O'Neal](#)

Published: Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Updated: Tuesday, October 25, 2011 02:10

Since childhood, senior Alyssa Kuchta has collected sea glass, vintage brooches, arrowheads and precious stones she acquired while traveling through Europe and Asia. Now she has turned her collections into a jewelry-making business.

Eff.Y.Bee, which stands for "follow your bliss," launched this summer and features an exclusive line for Main Street boutique Bloom. The Bloom line consists of bracelets and lock-and-key necklaces with quartz and drusy gems covered with tiny individual crystals. Each piece of jewelry is handmade.

Kuchta says she was inspired by her grandmother at an early age.

"My grandma had a lot of jewelry, and we would sit down and go through it and I would play dress up with it," Kuchta says. "She inspired me to love accessories and the beauty behind them."

Mimi Sullivan-Sparks, owner of Bloom, says she admires Kuchta's work and enjoys supporting a local artist.

"I choose items that are unique, insightful and unlike anything I have in the store so far—I see that in her work," Sullivan-Sparks says.



The Review/Samantha Mancuso

Alyssa Kuchta credits her grandmother as inspiration for her own jewelry lines.



The Review/Samantha Mancuso

Eff.Y.Bee features stones and materials Alyssa Kuchta has collected since her childhood.

The store currently sells a few necklaces and bracelets, but Sullivan-Sparks says she would like to broaden her Eff.Y.Bee inventory.

To support Haitian relief, Kuchta also sells "Bay Lavi" bracelets on campus, with fifty percent of proceeds going to student group Students for Haiti, which raises funds to build a maternity ward in Haiti. Each bracelet is made of fabric and has beads that spell out the word "kwe," which means "hope" in Haitian Creole.

Senior Victoria Winslow, vice president of Students for Haiti, says Kuchta's jewelry is helping to create a movement.

"I think people with similar interests as Alyssa will see what she's doing and want to benefit a cause they're passionate about," Winslow says.

As secretary of Students for Haiti, Kuchta wanted to personally support the cause by raising awareness and funds for Haiti using trend jewelry.

"Other members of the executive board were doing activities to raise money for the cause, and I thought this could be my way of contributing," she says.

Junior Teagan Thomas says she was drawn to the "Bay Lavi" line because of its message of hope.

"I feel like every single piece she puts in her line has a positive signature on it and has some meaning behind it," Thomas says.

Senior Morgan McSherry owns several necklaces from Kuchta's collection, including a custom-designed piece using one of Morgan's own stones.

"It's really impressive—she's a college student like one of us and she started this whole jewelry line on her own ambition," McSherry says.

Kuchta plans to expand her selection with rings and earrings, as well as starting a unisex line to encourage men to buy her work. She hopes to eventually sell her jewelry in boutiques across the country.

"I do not want to mass produce my jewelry, because it will lose its uniqueness since everyone will have a copy of the same one," she says. "That's what makes it so special, knowing that you are the only one to own it."