

Press Release
02/10/2009

Aussie Work USA Girls Work New York Fashion Week

Fashion Week in New York City this year created quite a stir amongst a small group of Australian women, who were given the opportunity to gain some invaluable work experience with top Aussie designer, Kit Willow.

The five women are all participants on International Exchange Programs (IEP) *Work USA* program, each holding a J1 Student Work and Travel visa that allows them to work in the USA for up to 12 months.

Mareesha Kate of Brown Hill, Victoria, contacted IEP from New York, in an effort to reach other participants who were interested in volunteering at the Fashion show where she had already lined up work. Some fast social networking took place through Facebook and within minutes a number of people showed interest and contacted Mareesha about the opportunity.

Mareesha enjoyed working alongside other talented Australians at such a prestigious event but admits it wasn't all lights, camera, action.

"Although our roles weren't glamorous, I was mainly hand sewing and beading, and Caroline (another IEP participant) was often sent on 'Devil Wears Prada' missions, it was great to see the organisation of the show: casting the models, fittings, seating arrangements, and juggling the creative side versus the selling side." Mareesha said.

Another *Work USA* participant, Chitti Lardi, had embarked on her American adventure with the hope of working in photography. Their contact at Willow introduced her to friends who worked for Fly Productions and they offered Chitti an internship to work with them on four shows during Fashion Week. Chitti worked the door at two shows, giving her plenty of opportunity for celeb spotting, but it was the backstage and runway photography work that provided her with a real taste of working in fashion photography.

The Mercedes-Benz New York Fashion Week for Spring/Summer 2010 took place from the 10-17 September 2009 at locations throughout New York including Bryant Park and New York Public Library.

Apart from Kit Willow, other Australian designers on show this year included Toni Maticevski, Anaessia (Michael Angel) and Lisa Vanikiotis.

It was not just the hands on experience that proved worthwhile for the IEP participants, but the opportunity to network with people within the industry, leading to other possible internships and even paid positions.

The pilot visa, which was recently extended for another year, has provided hundreds of eligible Australians with the opportunity to pursue their professional career, while travelling throughout the United States.

Australians or New Zealanders interested in the 12 months *Work USA* program need to be full time tertiary students who have completed at least a year of their course already or recent graduates who plan to enter the USA within 12 months of finishing their degree.

*****ENDS*****

Media Contact

Naomi Joyce-Marketing/PR Coordinator
naomi.joyce@iep.org.au
02 9299 0444
www.iep.org.au

IEP – SYDNEY Locked Bag 5065, Sydney South NSW 1235 | Ph +61 2 9299 0444 | Fax +61 2 9299 0399

IEP – MELBOURNE PO Box 13278, Law Courts Post Office, Melbourne VIC 8010 | Ph +61 3 9329 3866 | Fax +61 3 9329 1592

