

Youth Design gears up to take program nationwide

Six years ago **Denise Korn**, principal of **Korn Design**, launched **Youth Design Boston** — a nonprofit summer-jobs program that introduces talented, creative high school students to the graphic design profession through paid internships in Boston-area design firms.

More than \$30,000 of her own money, hundreds of hours and over 30 graduates later, Korn is taking Youth Design nationwide.

"We've already started to make our national footprint by reaching out to Denver," said Korn. "My goal in the next three years is to be in all major design pockets nationally."

"It's a very critical and exciting juncture for the program to explode," continued Korn. "The linchpin here is awareness and raising money."

Ten students will take part in the Boston program this year — the largest participation the program has seen to date. Youth Design Denver is kicking off the summer with three students. Another nucleus of the program is forming in Rhode Island.

Besides growing nationally, Korn is working with this year's students to develop products and take them through the process of design and execution of their own ideas. One idea is to create collectible Charlie Cards used on the **Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority** lines. Apparel may also be in the mix.



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Naomi R.
Kooker

"I think by developing products that could be sold and worn and used by kids across the city, it could also create awareness," said Korn.

Youth Design engages high school students selected from different Boston Public Schools. Once kids qualify (they have to be hungry for professional experience and show maturity and talent), they are paired with firms around the city.

They work 30-hour weeks for seven weeks, starting after July 4 through August. They're paid \$8.50 per hour or, as Korn says, \$2,200 per kid. Most of the firms pay the students themselves; Korn fundraises to cover supplemental costs. **Continuum**, an international design firm in Newton, has been an angel sponsor for the past three years. The **American Institute of Graphic Arts**, a professional association for design, is a partner locally and nationally.

Korn's impetus for Youth Design Boston came from Mayor **Thomas Menino's** Summer Jobs program; she and a bevy of volunteers from her office work with

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Boston's **Private Industry Council**.

"They actually work," said Korn of students. "They're paid to go to work, 9 to 5, as designers. ... A lot of these kids are very talented, doodling on sketch books. It's never explained to them or their families they could channel that to a career goal."

Korn Design clients range from luxury clients such as **The Charles Hotel** to nonprofits, including **Rosie's Place**.

Grass-roots giving

When a fire tore through the home of a teenage intern working at **Haley House Cafe and Bakery**, **Didi Emmons**, executive chef of the cooking program

for youth at the bakery, got on her computer.

She banged out an e-mail to 500 of her closest friends and asked each one to donate \$10 to Erica, the 15-year-old intern, and her family. The family is still displaced and living in a hotel in Danvers. Erica didn't have clothes; the family needed food.

Erica had been working at **Haley House** for a few weeks as **Emmons'** right-hand gal, assisting with cooking classes and daily operations. Erica keeps a daily log about her experience, for which she's paid a stipend from **Children Services of Roxbury**, the nonprofit that helped place her at the bakery. **Emmons**, right off, was impressed with the teen who is shy but also focused and organized.

"I like to learn about other people's cultures because when I grow up I want to own my own restaurant and I want to have different types of foods from all around the world," Erica wrote in her journal.

Emmons has raised \$1,500 to date — not bad for a few e-mails; one check was \$200. Erica now has clothes and still works at **Haley House**.

"We all do what we can to help each other," said **Emmons**, who also co-owns **Veggie Planet** in Harvard Square. "This really wasn't a whole lot of effort for me."