

Sewing Up a Dream



Bayer (left) and Murphy of Laurenceleste

From strangers to
organic entrepreneurs
... two young women
on a mission.



Lauren Murphy met Celeste Bayer through a San Francisco roommate referral service 10 years ago, and they clicked. "We had the same sense of humor, we both had studied art history, and we both loved the outdoors," says Murphy. The two moved in together and soon realized they shared something else: the dream of starting a business. Not just any kind of business, but one that would allow them to fully engage their creative juices while gently helping the planet. "We would sit in Golden Gate Park and discuss all sorts of wild ideas," says Murphy.

When the children's clothing company Bayer had been designing for went belly-up, Murphy, who had been working in an art gallery, decided it was time she found a new job as well. The roommates used fabric and sewing machines from Bayer's former employer and began whipping up kids' sundresses for an upcoming craft fair. "I remember us laughing a lot during our all-night sewing marathons, which was a good sign, I guess," says Murphy.

They took their floral print clothing to the fair—and sold almost every piece. "One woman asked if we had a catalog and how she could get on the mailing list," says Bayer. "That's when we knew we had something."

Today, based in a Chicago studio, the Laurenceleste line offers EcoSpun fleece, organic-cotton, and recycled-cotton outfits and accessories for babies and toddlers. (You'll find them at upscale baby boutiques and on the Web at www.laurenceleste.com.) Stylish celebs such as Têa Leoni and Sting purchase the ecofashions for their kids and as gifts.

And Lauren and Celeste (ages 32 and 33, respectively) are still trying to save the world. Fabric scraps that can't be used in next season's line are donated to quiltmakers and local schools. Slightly flawed or leftover clothing is sent to an orphanage. Even the office's employees have adopted the recycling habits of their bosses: You'll find only reusable coffee mugs on their desks and recycling bins underneath them. "I've just never had that throw-away instinct in me," explains Bayer. Smart girls; no wonder they made it so fast. ✨