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San Francisco's First Fashion Incubator to Reignite City's Flare for Apparel Design

Mayor Edwin M. Lee Supports Incubator's Efforts to Keep Creative Talent in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO – July 11, 2011 – San Francisco's first fashion incubator was introduced today with the goal of reclaiming the City's legacy as a leader in the fashion apparel industry. Called the Fashion Incubator San Francisco at Macy's Union Square (FISF), the group's mission is to turn creative fashion apparel designers into successful San Francisco entrepreneurs.

FISF is a non-profit business development organization that will nurture and mentor the City's fashion design talent and provide them the tools and resources needed to establish and grow businesses of their own. Each year FISF will provide six Designers in Residence with premier workshop space in Macy's offices at Union Square where they can create new lines and showcase their collections to merchants, ranging from local boutiques to national retailers. FISF also will offer business operations training from experts in the San Francisco fashion and economic development communities. The first class of designers is expected to move into the FISF workshop in March 2012 for their yearlong training.

"FISF is an innovative way to drive creative design and entrepreneurial success in San Francisco's fashion industry," said San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee. "By providing wrap-around business support to the City's fashion designers, FISF will help keep our creative talent here while building an economic base for continued job growth."

FISF is operated by a board of directors comprised of leaders in the San Francisco fashion and business development communities. A manager of operations will oversee day-to-day management of the incubator, ensuring that Designers in Residence are exposed to the resources that will be most helpful in establishing successful businesses.

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Page 2/Fashion Incubator San Francisco at Macy's Union Square

"FISF will help local designers get plugged into the many local resources and talents that the San Francisco business community has to offer," said Dennis Conaghan, executive director of the San Francisco Center for Economic Development and president of the FISF board of directors. "We applaud the efforts of independent organizations like FISF for their work in helping aspiring entrepreneurs flourish in their chosen industry."

FISF expects to announce plans for the Designer in Residence program in September at Macy's Fashion's Night Out events, with hopes that incubator graduates will be showcasing their lines at the event in the future.

"Macy's has long been a supporter of up-and-coming fashion designers. FISF was developed from the blueprint of the Chicago Fashion Incubator at Macy's on State Street, where 83 percent of the program participants have opened apparel businesses that are thriving," said Betsy Nelson, vice president of media relations and cause marketing for Macy's northwest and southwest regions. "Through FISF's incubator program, we can identify emerging local talent, provide the environment and materials to develop their collections, and introduce participants to the broader fashion community."

Macy's at Union Square initiated the FISF, established its 501c3 status and will house the incubator at its Union Square offices, including all needed supplies and machinery, storage for materials and samples, merchant showroom space and a classroom.

The Fashion Incubator San Francisco at Macy's Union Square is guided by a board of directors comprised of fashion, retail and business development experts.

- Dennis Conaghan – FISF Board President and Executive Director, San Francisco Center for Economic Development
- Betsy Nelson – FISF Board VP and Vice President, Media Relations and Cause Marketing for Macy's Northwest and Southwest Regions
- Louis Meunier – FISF Secretary/Treasurer and Business Consultant
- Diane Green – Fashion Department Chair, City College of San Francisco

- Beau Simon – Partner, Cooper, White & Cooper LLP
- Dan Stevens – Senior Vice President, Fleishman-Hillard
- Amy Williams – Fashion Design Chair, California College of the Arts

About Fashion Incubator San Francisco at Macy's Union Square

FISF is a non-profit incubator committed to turning fashion apparel designers into successful San Francisco entrepreneurs and employers. Each year FISF will provide six Designers in Residence with premiere workshop space at Macy's offices in downtown San Francisco and will offer yearlong business operations training from experts in the San Francisco fashion and economic development communities.

For more information on FISF and to learn how to get involved, visit www.fashionincubatorsf.org.

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