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## Children's Fashion Show Highlights Their Own Creativity and Individuality

By Sophie Braccini



Isabel Azam hosted a fashion show at the Hacienda. Photos Sophie Braccini

adds. "I have distinct memories of her and a Montessori-style preschool she started in a village in Iran when I was little." This was a great accomplishment given the government and politics in Iran. "Despite having passed for many years, her joy of teaching music and art to little kids continues to inspire me daily," Naasz says.

Naasz came to this country with her family when she was nine. Her mother started an alteration shop as a means for the family's survival. The girl was a fashionista from the start and her husband says that he saw her prom picture with the 10 friends, for whom she had made all the dresses. She studied fashion at the Academy of Art in San Francisco and worked in that industry until she started a family herself.

"This is a tough industry, very cutthroat," she says, "but I decided not to give it up and create something myself."

At this second fashion show, little girls walked the runway all in their own style, from the confident to the bashful, by themselves or as sisters. The dresses were the expression of their desires. On [www.IsabelAzam.com](http://www.IsabelAzam.com) they had ordered the customizable dress kit that gives them the choices of patterns and tools to create their very own model. Then came the selection of colors and fabrics.

"When I took my 3-year-old daughter shopping for fabric I learned that she had a very definite opinion about what she wanted, and it was not necessarily what I would have recommended," says Naasz with a bright and genuine smile. "And it turned out very well." Clients choose their own fabric, buy the size indicated in the kit according to their measurements, and return everything to Naasz for fabrication.

Isabel Azam held its second kids fashion show on July 20 in the Pavilion of the Hacienda de Las Flores in Moraga. The concept is original, having little girls choose their own pattern and fabrics and having the dress of their dreams created especially for them.

Jaleh Naasz, a fashion professional and mom of two little girls, created Isabel Azam. She is growing her company by hiring locals to sew the dresses, and by expanding the range of her products. At the heart of it all is the trust she has in children's creativity and her own passion for fashion.

Why did Jaleh Naasz call her business Isabel Azam? It is far from trivial. Isabel Azam is the combination of Naasz' daughters middle names, Persia Isabel and Raven Azam. She adds that Raven's middle name, Azam, in Farsi means all encompassing/grand.

"Azam was also the name of my aunt who passed tragically in her mid-30s when I lived in Iran" she

New this year on the runway was a group of girls who had been in an Isabel Azam camp where they made their own dresses. The diversity of colors, styles and shapes was very uplifting; each girl really expressed something of themselves in these dresses.

For the past year Naasz has grown her business organically, adding adult dresses when moms asked her for a matching dress with their daughters', and adding hero shirts for boys who wanted to be included. Since everything is done locally and she wants to control the integrity of the output she has decided to continue to do the cutting and assembling herself, while she can work with local women to sew the dresses.

Now each dress created by a girl is named after her, displayed on the site and can be purchased and customized by someone else. Naasz also offers the option of getting the fabric for those who do not enjoy fabric shopping.

At the fashion show, many other women from the Lamorinda Moms group came to help. "They are all my friends," says Naasz. Many local businesses sponsored her, such as Dry Style Lounge that helps with the hair of the little models, Melissa Bartlett for photography, Cotton Patch who gave the fabrics for the dress of the superstar of the show, Finley Brown, and many others that gave items to the raffle. Naasz's brother and his firm Paymun Real Estate & Mortgage was also there.

"Being immigrants here, there is a lot of entrepreneurship in our family," says Naasz, and they all support each other.



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