

Mom launches clothing line after searching for right clothes for sons

BY MORGAN IAN ADAMS

COLLINGWOOD — Just as it says on her shirt, Michelle Ward is a bit of a dreamer.

And Ward dreams big.

The founder of Fly Gurlz, the first woman-specific Ontario Cycling Association mountain bike club in Canada (and the first woman-specific mountain bike club in North America, for that matter), has put her mind to tackling something other than navigating around rocks and tree roots.

A year ago, Ward launched a clothing line — Addaboy — specifically designed for boys ages three months to eight years. She creates the designs, and she's sourced out a manufacturer in Toronto for production.

"Boys really get the shaft in the clothing industry," said Ward, the mother two boys ages three and seven. "I'm

coming from a male-dominated (sport) where there was very little for women, and here's it's the reverse.

"You go into any clothing store for kids, and it's like there's three-quarters for the girls."

She's also filling a void in the market for boys clothing, which Ward says seems to be either "heavy-duty punk rock" design, or 'varsity' — clothing with logos from universities or colleges.

Ward creates all the graphics herself, and hand silk-screens the images onto her fabrics before taking it Toronto for production. She also has 26 'sayings', such as "Dreamer", "Silbing Exciter", and "Crowd Pleaser."

The designs tend to be colourful and slightly psychedelic, and in most cases music-related; the line was inspired by her eldest, Kale, who loves music and wanted something "fun" to wear.

When Ward went looking for what Kale was asking for, she came up empty — and hence, a business was born.

Because she does all the graphic and silk screening, each item of clothing tends to be "one-of-a-kind."

Addaboy is now in several boutique clothing stores across Ontario, and she sells across North America through her website (www.addaboy.ca).

"I didn't know it would grow so fast," she said.

The biggest challenge was finding a Canadian manufacturer, rather than going overseas for production.

"I'm keeping it all-Canadian, basi-



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Michelle Ward shows off a selection of her clo

cally," she said, noting the Canadian clothing production industry has been largely decimated by production facilities in low-cost, Third World countries.

"I didn't want to see kids' stuff that was