I go to Riverpoint Academy, which is a project based school in the Mead School district for juniors and seniors. Instead of having a semester final with a paper and pencil test, we would have a project to present in front of our parents and people from the Mead School District administration. In the first semester of my senior year, I signed up for a class called Trep Studio, which is an entrepreneur class that makes a positive change in our community. A little in to the semester, we started picking topics to do our semester project on. There was one topic I really wanted to do; which is fashion. There were three other girls who wanted to do that topic as well: Sam, Saliah, and Ashley.

For the first few days after we picked our project group, we jus got to know each other. We talked about our families, our hobbies, and our interests, which just so happens to be fashion. After getting to know each other, we did some researching online about fashion in general, like who first invented the high heel and the first guy to be a designer. We did this to get a better understanding of our topic and gain empathy for the fashion industry. We got very interested in one particular fact about chemicals in the clothing and the waste of raw materials. So we thought ‘how can we make the fashion industry more sustainable?’ So we came up with the business Ecowear. We thought Ecowear could be a business that takes unwanted clothes, such as t-shirts, pants, sweaters, and other clothes, and repurpose it by making rugs, pillowcases, blankets, and pillows. Once we’ve made enough products, we would sell them to the public for a reasonable price.

Next, we researched companies on the Internet who have a business similar to ours. We found two in the Spokane area: Fringe and Fray, and The Blue Button. We called each company and set up a meeting as well as a tour of the establishment. We first went to Fringe and Fray, which is similar to a thrift store except they only accept clothes from the forties to the sixties and seventies. When we visited the store, we asked her questions he wrote down and she answered them. Later, we walked around the store and saw what they sold there. We used the information she gave us about her store as inspiration for our business.

Next, we went to a shirt-screening store called The Blue Button. When we visited the store, we talked to the manager about the store. We were informed that the ink they use to screen the shirts are water based, so if the ink goes down the drain, it won’t contaminate the ocean. Also, we were informed that the shirts you can choose from are made from organic cotton, so they’re not made from the chemicals you would usually find in a shirt, and they’re softer than the normal t-shirt. Another thing we found out is that the employees are immigrants who just moved to the United States and needed the job, and we thought that was pretty cool.

When we went back to the school, we started thinking about the company, and we thought ‘how can we make our company better by helping people?’ We did some more research, and one of my group members mentioned The Guild School. The Guild School is a school for children 0-3 who have learning disabilities or who need special attention. We called one of the Planned Giving Officers named Bobbie, and we set up a meeting for the next Monday. We thought of questions to ask her about the school beforehand. When we got to The Guild School, we were taken in a conference room where they gave us a pamphlet about the school, and they showed us a video about The Guild School. A little while after, we asked what we could do to help the students attending The Guild School. They said they needed more bibs, and they mention hats and headbands for the students who have Cochlear Implants. Cochlear Implants are very similar to hearing aids, except the part that picks up the signal is implanted to the side of the head right above their ear. After our meeting, Bobbie gave us a tour of the school. We saw where the parents go while the children are learning, we saw the classrooms, we saw the gymnasium, and we saw a little closet that’s called Miss. Santa Clause’s Workshop. It was around Christmas time when we went there, so when we went inside the closet, it was filled with toys for the parents to choose from for their children with no cost. That was my favorite place to go because it was very fun on the inside and there was so many toys to choose from, and it was for a very good cause.

When we went back to the school, we did some thinking about our project. We liked the idea that the children with Cochlear Implants wore hats and headbands to protect the implant. One of our group members said she was into crocheting. So we made an idea to crochet hats and headbands for the children at The Guild School who has Cochlear Implants and donate them to the children. There was one problem; two other group members, including myself, didn’t know how to crochet. So we went to Michael’s craft store and bought three crocheting hooks. The group member who knew how to crochet had lots of yarn, so she brought them to school with her, and she taught us how to crochet. Within an hour, I was getting the hang of crocheting and I was making my first hat. The other group members were learning just as fast as I was.

A few weeks later, we decided that we needed more materials if we were going to make quite a bit of hats and headbands. We asked the school for a purchase order of $100, and within a few days, the purchase order was approved. We went to Hobby Lobby with one of our teachers and bought $68 worth of yarn. When we got back to the school, were started crocheting. We’ve made many hats, each with a different design and a different character. I’ve made a bear, a black beanie with a rainbow bow on the side, a penguin, and many others. There has been a Minion, Piglet, Olaf, a polar bear, a monster, and other characters.

Over the past few weeks of crocheting, I’ve learned a lot. I’ve learned to crochet, I’ve learned to break my fear of talking to people I don’t know, and I’ve learned to do something generous for others. Making these hats and headbands has gotten me excited about the children will think when they receive these, and that makes me do high quality work on them.