

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Is “Made in the USA” the End of the Disposable Fashion?

*More apparel companies are manufacturing in America, refocusing on quality and supporting local economies*

Durham, NC - November 14, 2011 – Apparel designers Jolie and Elizabeth, famous for their seersucker dresses, and School House, which designs fashion-forward collegiate apparel, are spearheading a new brand of “Made in the USA” manufacturing.

The young fashion labels are educating apparel workers on “slow fashion” throughout their cut and sew operations in Louisiana and North Carolina. Borrowing from the “slow food” movement, slow clothing is about embracing responsibly made, quality clothing over trendy, cheap and “disposable” apparel.

“Garments should be an investment, they should be well-made and last for years,” says Jolie Bensen, Co-Founder of Jolie and Elizabeth. “What’s trendy doesn’t always look complimentary on young women – they are getting used to throwing out apparel after 3 or 4 wears, and have forgotten the value of a beautiful dress.”

With more clothiers looking to establish US manufacturing and ride demand for American-made products, “disposable” fashion has fallen out of trend as companies like School House look to make it here in the US. After moving its fair-wage manufacturing from Sri Lanka to North Carolina last spring, School House has worked one-on-one with partners and suppliers to ensure the focus of their US-made clothing is on craftsmanship and quality.

“We believe ‘Made in America’ can and should be associated with the best clothing in the marketplace,” says School House CEO Rachel Weeks. “As a brand, that means partnering with factories to train sewers on our unique items, and working to reinvigorate communities that lost so much talent and pride when this industry left the United States.”

Investing in local manufacturing and refocusing on quality are two of the main reasons Jolie Bensen and Sarah Elizabeth Dewey decided to set up shop in New Orleans, LA, rather than opting for fashion hubs like LA and NYC. After learning the ropes at BCBG, where Jolie and Sarah Elizabeth first met, they now are on their way to joining School House as one of the only vertically integrated apparel design companies in the South. By keeping production close to their studio, the designers have more control over the quality of their garment, and also contribute to the economic development by promoting more middle class manufacturing jobs in Louisiana.

“The positive impact of keeping dollars circulating within our own local economy and utilizing untapped local labor resources to create jobs is key for our company. But specifically, in a sector that America has abandoned over the past twenty years: apparel manufacturing. It’s time we return to that ‘Rosie the Riveter’ idea- that we as a country *can* rely upon itself, for a product that is a basic household necessity: apparel.” says Bensen.

Both School House and Jolie and Elizabeth have collections available to shop online at [www.shopschoolhouse.com](http://www.shopschoolhouse.com) and [www.jolieandelizabeth.com](http://www.jolieandelizabeth.com). School House will launch collections at over 20 new colleges in November and Jolie and Elizabeth are currently sold at over 50 boutiques across the country, and continue to expand with their seasonal collections.

#### **About School House:**

In 2007, Rachel Weeks traveled to Sri Lanka as a Fulbright Scholar to build a socially responsible clothing company. Her dream, which started with a t-shirt and an order from her alma mater at Duke, has transformed into School House, a fashion-forward, ethically sourced collegiate apparel brand. School House’s collections of men’s and women’s “Made in America” collegiate tees, hoodies, lounge pants, dresses and more are available online at [www.shopschoolhouse.com](http://www.shopschoolhouse.com) and at 100+ collegiate bookstore retailers nationwide.

#### **About Jolie and Elizabeth:**

A contemporary women’s apparel company designed and manufactured in New Orleans, Louisiana, Jolie and Elizabeth is one of the only completely vertically integrated clothing companies in the South. Their retailers span from Georgia to California, as well as through their online shop, [www.jolieandelizabeth.com](http://www.jolieandelizabeth.com). The two twenty-something-year-old designers founded their line in 2009 when they returned to New Orleans after feeling the lag of the economy in NY. They now proudly boast a “Made in

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Louisiana" tag on every garment to commemorate their locally made product in the factory they discovered still struggling to get back on its feet after Katrina. In addition to making an impact on the area's economy, Jolie and Sarah Elizabeth frequently speak at area high schools and universities, and incorporate ongoing guest design competitions to contribute to the decreasing number of apparel design graduate opportunities.