

# Kids in stitches: Girls gain confidence in Urban Stitch Studios sewing classes

Feb 19, 2013 | Sewing Class: Alicia Thomas, Amanda Williams and Avery Lamb learn to sew in Jennifer Todd's sewing class.

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Above, Avery Lamb, 8, works on a dress for her doll during an Urban Stitch Studios sewing class on Jan. 30 in southwest Reno.

## SEWING CLASSES FOR KIDS

WHEN: Hourlong classes offered several times a week

WHERE: Urban Stitch Studios, 2840 Monterey Drive, Reno

DETAILS: Jennifer at 775-824-0729 or [urbanstitchstudios@gmail.com](mailto:urbanstitchstudios@gmail.com)



Photo by Andy Barron --- 130129 Avery Lamb, 8, pins a dress she is sewing for her doll during a sewing class at Jennifer Todd's Reno home on Jan. 30, 2013. / RGJ



Photo by Andy Barron --- 130129 Lauren Sapterstein, 9, pins a pattern to her material during a weekly sewing class at Jennifer Todd's Reno home on Jan. 30, 2013. / RGJ

When Avery Lamb sets out to sew a seam, it gets sewn. And well. Same thing with Addie Armon. Avery is 8 and Addie is 10, but they're learning their way around a sewing machine quite well. Along with other local girls, Avery and Addie are learning the fine art of stitchery.

Sewing fell out of favor over the years as women — generally the seamstresses in most families — spent more time in the workplace, but since the mid-2000s, media such as Time Magazine and the New York Times report, sewing has regained popularity with the advent of do-it-yourself television shows. Jennifer Todd is teaching girls as young as 6 and as old as midteens how to sew their own clothes and other items, using the Kids Can Sew curriculum at her Urban Stitch Studios in southwest Reno.

“When we grew up, we had to learn to sew”, Todd said. Now, she finds that kids — primarily girls, although boys are welcome to take the classes — gain confidence when they learn to sew. “They’ll say, ‘I can’t believe I made this,’” Todd said. “We’ll do a fashion show this summer, and that will be huge for their confidence. Just to create at any level is good.”

Over the years, several of Todd’s students have gone on to become fashion designers, and several current students are interested in that career. “When you do fashion, you have to sew,” she said. Todd’s students are as young as 6, and she’ll accept students up to 16. She has seven classes, limiting the number of students in each class to four. She also has an adult class.

“My focus is on the kids,” she said. “I have girls get up (to age 15 or 16) who ask, ‘You’re not going to kick me out, are you?’”

Todd teaches the classes in her southwest Reno home, where she has a classroom set up with four sewing machines. Previously, she taught sewing for about five years in the 1990s but was raising her children and had another job. Last year, she decided to start teaching again. “Now is the perfect time to do it,” she said. The girls are excited about learning, and parents are encouraging.

Alisa Armon said her daughter, Addie, came to her and said she wanted to learn. “I do sewing. She wanted to (learn) under me, but I knew it was best to learn from someone else,” Armon said. “Addie is 10. She’s done it about a year now. It’s wonderful what they’ve accomplished.”

Clayton Lamb’s two daughters, Avery and Sydney, 11, started in the class about a year ago. “She’s working on an invention for a science project,” Lamb said of Avery’s sewing project that involves a no-drip protector that absorbs water. “She’s making it for a doll to demonstrate what it will be like on a human,” he said. Todd “adapted a doll pattern for this.” Sydney Lamb said she really likes the class. “Once you make (something), it’s a big accomplishment,” she said, “and it makes you feel good.”

Sahara Wilcock, 11, saw an ad for the classes and wanted to join.

Samantha Robb, 10, was attracted by the items that Todd sews. “I usually make the same things,” said Samantha, who’s been in the class for two or three months.

The first class in the curriculum is safety, Todd said. Students first practice with paper, learning to sew straight lines, to pivot, sew circles and keep a seam allowance.

With only four students in each class, Todd can work individually with students. “Most of them have no familiarity with sewing,” she said of the students. “Maybe their mom thought it was a good idea (to learn), or they have friends who sew. ”The first project is a drawstring bag, the second is a denim skirt and the third project is pajama pants. “Some also do quilts, pillowcases,” Todd said. “If something is within their abilities, they can do it. ... Working individually is most important to me — to have fun and enjoy the process.”