

**Allie Blain**  
**November 14, 2022**

### **Storytelling Assignment 4**

“This has been something I’ve dreamed about since I was a little girl,” said Lauren Bell as she recalled her time modeling for Runway of Dreams at their 2022 New York Fashion Week show.



Lauren grew up flipping through fashion magazines in the checkout line of Publix, watching seasons of Project Runway, and dreaming about what it would be like if she was a model. Living with a disability that affects the lower half of her body, Lauren sought to find a way to break through the modeling scene that has historically highlighted non-disabled women.

While studying graphic design at Samford University, Bell found a

way to incorporate her passion for inclusion with her education.

“I hope to bring people with disabilities into fashion marketing one day.”

While completing one of her final projects for her Graphic Design classes, she had the opportunity to do a hypothetical rebrand. Bell chose a company called “the Roll-Ettes”, a dancing group composed of people in wheelchairs.

“I wanted to rebrand them, and when looking for content, I came across this account called ‘Runway of Dreams’”

It was their bio that truly captivated Bell, stating that they are “A non-profit organization that works toward a future of inclusion, acceptance, and opportunity in the fashion industry. #RethinkTheRunway” (<https://www.instagram.com/runwayofdreams/?hl=en>). In describing their business model, Runway of Dreams also encapsulated Bell’s passion for inclusion.

Lauren boldly messaged their brand account on Instagram, gushing over their mission and offering to help them with any graphic design or makeup artistry, two of her notable skills and talents. She didn't expect a response, and she certainly didn't expect for their response to be this: "We would love to see if you would be interested in modeling in our NYFW show."

"I was shaking... I was like 'I need to call my mom right now'"

During the entirety of her experience, Bell was convinced that this offer was "too good to be true." Because of this, she chose to keep her involvement with Runway of Dreams to herself, only telling a few close friends and family members until the day before her NYFW debut.

As she approached the runway, she started to feel like she was having a religious experience.

"Hear me out, walking the runway almost felt like a baptism. I got on the ramp and my heart was racing. I had no option but to walk."

Growing up intrigued by the fashion industry, Lauren expected a "glam" outfit, but ended up modeling something "everyday." Regardless, everything about NYFW exceeded her expectations. She wore a jacket that had spaces in the back, designed specifically for wheelchair users so the fabric of the jacket would not get snagged in their wheels as well as shoes that zipped in the front for accessibility for people who use leg braces.

"I believe fashion should give confidence and bring out your best self," said Ashley Gootie, owner of a Birmingham design studio as well as four-time NYFW fashion assistant for both Zac Posen and Peter Som. Lauren was able to boldly model for Runway of Dreams, highlighting what makes her special.

"You are beautiful the way you were created" is the biggest lesson that Lauren learned through this process. Throughout college, she worked on her personal confidence and finding her identity in Christ. Without this experience, she feels like she wouldn't have been successful in her NYFW debut.

"I'm open to whatever is next," said Lauren when asked if she would consider modeling again



in the future. She has recently signed with Gamut Management, a talent company specialized in representing people with disabilities. Following her graduation from Samford University this December, Bell anticipates opportunities to model with Gamut management in the future.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIRST ANNUAL FUN RUN TO SUPPORT CHILD LIFE AT CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK HOSPITAL**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (Aug, 21, 2023) – Children's Miracle Network Hospital is proud to present "Trick or Trot," a 5K to raise money for a new wing of Children's of Alabama. The wing will be specifically dedicated towards Child Life, providing resources and support for families with children with life altering illnesses. This event will take place on October 28, 2023 from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and will cost \$30 per participant, with additional donations strongly encouraged.

This Halloween-themed event will also include "Squeals on Wheels," a "just for fun" race for individuals with all abilities. Participants are encouraged to bring their favorite wheels (bike, wheelchair, scooter, walker, roller blades, etc.) and join in on the fun. Patients will parade the hospital corridors in their Halloween costumes at 1:00 p.m. and all participants are invited to watch.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with our Child Life department to provide this event for our families," said Tom Shufflebarger, President and Chief Executive office for Children's of Alabama. "Our Child Life Specialists work hard to ensure that each patient and their family are provided with the best quality care and support."

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**About Children's Miracle Network Hospital**

Since 1911, Children's of Alabama has provided specialized medical care for ill and injured children, offering inpatient and outpatient services throughout central Alabama. Ranked among

the best pediatric medical centers in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, Children's provided care for young patients from every county in Alabama, 46 other states and seven foreign countries last year, representing more than 676,000 outpatient visits and more than 15,000 inpatient admissions. With more than 2 million square feet, Children's is the third largest pediatric medical facility in the U.S.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GOVERNOR SHAPIRO HONORS MEMORY OF 9/11 VICTIMS IN SHANKSVILLE**

SHANKSVILLE, Pa. (Sept. 11, 2023) - Every year on this day, our community gathers to celebrate the memory of lives lost on United Airlines Flight 93. Gov. Josh Shapiro and First Lady, Lori Shapiro, are hosting a ceremony today at the Flight 93 National Memorial beginning at 2 p.m. EST.

This ceremony will include a moment of silence for those passed as well as speeches and wreath-laying. Surviving family members of the victims of Flight 93 will be honored during this time. Visitors are encouraged and asked to be considerate and respectful throughout the ceremony.

“Lori and I will be in Shanksville today to remember the ordinary Americans who did an extraordinary thing – whose courage and bravery saved American lives, and whose stories are now a part of our history,” Gov. Shapiro said in a statement this morning. “They are the best of America. They showed the world our true character. Today and every day, I’m proud to be an American and I’m proud to be a Pennsylvanian.”

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**About Governor Shapiro**

Pennsylvania raised, Shapiro grew up with a desire to serve his community. Having previously served as Pennsylvania Attorney General and Chairman of the Board of Commissioners in Montgomery County, Shapiro has fought for marriage equality, lowering costs for families to boost economic development in the state and has pledged that he will not issue any execution warrants during his term.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA ADVISORY: FIRST ANNUAL FUN RUN TO SUPPORT CHILD LIFE AT CHILDREN'S  
MIRACLE NETWORK HOSPITAL**

**WHO:** Children's Miracle Network Hospital is proud to present "Trick or Trot." Guests of honor include members of the Child Life team, parents and families of children with life altering illnesses and Children's of Alabama president, Tom Shufflebarger.

**WHAT:** A 5K supporting a new wing of Childrens of Alabama specifically dedicated towards Child Life, providing resources and support for families with children with life altering illnesses. and will cost \$30 per participant, with additional donations strongly encouraged.

**WHERE:** Railroad Park, 1600 1st Ave S

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28

**SPECIAL MEDIA INFORMATION:** Media are invited to be at the event at 8:45 to obtain footage as participants arrive. There will be designated parking in the Regions Field lot for media members. All members will be given identifying badges that they will be required to wear throughout the duration of the event.

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## Phi Mu policy frustrates party goers

April 29, 2022

Allie Blain



BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- “I happen to think it was quite annoying”, answered Madelyn Doster, freshman member of Delta Delta Delta Epsilon Xi, when asked what she thought of Phi Mu Alpha Gamma’s event policy. Members of Phi Mu Alpha Gamma are required to arrive at every date party, semi formal, and formal event within a thirty minute time frame and must stay at the event until it is over.

“Our rule is that everyone gets there between a certain time,” says Kate Gunn, 2022 Director of Harm Reduction and Prevention for Phi Mu Alpha Gamma, “If the event starts at 6:00, I will usually say ‘get there between 6:00 and 6:20. We don’t let people in the doors after that.” This rule is strictly enforced with very few exceptions made. For the latest chapter event, Carnation Ball, only one member of the chapter was let in after 6:20 due to a previously scheduled conflict.

Members of Phi Mu Alpha Gamma, as well as their dates, are required to stay until the event is over. Gunn said this was due to safety, there is a difference in liability between people driving on Phi Mu’s time versus driving on their own time. She believes there is a benefit to the entire chapter staying together, and thinks that this provides a safe opportunity for the members of her chapter to have a great time.

Alongside of this check-in and check-out policy, there is a strict designated driver policy. According to Alpha Gamma bylaws a Phi Mu must be the one behind the wheel when commuting to events. This member is required to sign a contract stating that she will not drink and drive as well as submitting her car insurance and license plate number. “According to our current policy with the designated driver program given by nationals, a Phi Mu drives”, Gunn stated.

Doster, who attended a Phi Mu date party with her roommate, stated that she did not feel any difference in her safety when comparing her experiences at Phi Mu with Delta Delta Delta. “We are allowed to leave whenever we want. There is the occasional time when they ask us to get there at a certain time but that does not stop us from leaving whenever we want”

Many are questioning the necessity of these guidelines. Gunn, herself, stated that she is trying to get the driving policy changed so that someone who is not a member of Phi Mu can be the one to drive to events. Regardless of opinions presented on this policy, it is clear to see that Phi Mu Alpha Gamma cares deeply about the safety of their chapter members.