

**MPN**now.com

The leading news source in suburban Rochester and the Finger Lakes.

## Greece Post

By Jessica Spies, staff writer  
June 11, 2009



### The Greece high school tycoon

Greece, N.Y.-Bobby Jones recently launched his business, an online venture he calls Pillow Perfection. He makes and sells his own custom pillows and bedroom sets.

Here's the catch: Jones is only 18 and hasn't even graduated from high school. On June 27, he'll be among the 300 or so who get their diplomas from Athena High School in Greece.

Jones launched Pillow Perfection with the help of Young Entrepreneurs Academy, or YEA! It's a new course at Athena that guides students through the process of starting real businesses. They come up with a business plan, pitch it to an investor panel, get funding and — hopefully — launch the venture. By the end of the school year, students will have formed a functioning business.

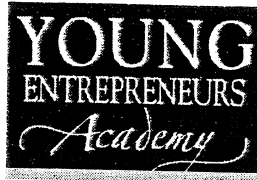
Jones will be attending the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City in the fall to major in fashion design. It was a trip to the library a few years ago that inspired him to pursue a career in fashion.

"I was at the Greece Library and I was supposed to find a summer reading book," he said. Jones found John Peacock's "Fashions of the 20th Century," a book that chronicles the industry. I had \$20 in fines because I kept checking it out," said Jones, who ended up buying the book.

Since then, he has studied fashions in the book, tracing them and then eventually creating his own.

On May 1, Jones presented his business idea before a panel of judges as part of the YEA! Saunders Scholars Bright Ideas Regional Business Competition at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The YEA! program is offered at schools throughout the nation. Because Jones had the most money from investors in his class, he was one of seven students from around the area to present as part of the competition. Jones received \$2,055 from investors, which he'll put back into his business by buying more material. Jean Miceli, Greece Athena's YEA! teacher, has seen plenty of changes in Jones.



“He has really taken initiative,” she said. “He does so many unbelievable, awesome things all on his own and comes in and shares his enthusiasm and excitement for what he has done.”

Miceli has also seen a similar transformation in all of her students.

“They have developed more confidence in speaking skills,” she said, adding that nearly all of the students have become better leaders. Jones has already started to showcase his creations at boutiques in the Rochester area and in the Memorial Art Gallery gift shop.

His Web site, [www.pillowperfection.com](http://www.pillowperfection.com), is up and running. He plans to keep it going after the YEA! program ends this month. Miceli said the program will again be available at Athena next year and applications will be accepted throughout the summer.