

FIRST YEAR STUDIES PROGRAM INSPIRES FALALO

Jennifer J. Liskow'02G*
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PHOTO BY DANIEL MARINO '99

One semester, students in Rivier's First Year Seminar program researched where and how their clothes were made. Many learned that their favorite sweatshirts came from sweatshops—factories where laborers work in deplorable conditions for low wages. Associate Professor of English and Communications **Liz Wright** says that students' comments and questions about what they had learned struck her. "They asked, 'where can we get clothes that aren't made in sweatshops?' It really sunk in," she says.

In May 2007, Wright met a woman involved with HandCrafting Justice, a fair trade project that helps women in developing countries become financially independent by selling hand-made crafts. The two became friends and Wright began volunteering to help sell crafts at church fairs. "My husband came to help and he was amazed," she says. "Everywhere we went, people would say, 'where do we get this stuff when you're not here?' and we'd tell them what fair we'd be at next."

Wright says that her husband, Scott, has always wanted to have his own business. The more the two became involved with HandCrafting Justice, the more Scott began to consider opening a retail store to sell fair trade and locally made crafts. Wright attended several workshops on starting a business. In March, Wright's husband filed paperwork to legally establish their

business. Soon after, a storefront they could afford became available on Ladd Street in Portsmouth, NH.

FaLaLo opened on Memorial Day weekend. The name is based on the goods they sell: fair labor and locally-made products. "We wanted to be upbeat—we wanted to be about hope," she says. The store's logo incorporates bright colors and a painting by a local artist, further emphasizing the store's focus.

"We work with ten fair trade organizations and tons of local craftspeople and artists," Wright says. She takes care of buying and public relations, while her husband oversees the store's finances and daily operations. Wright's work at FaLaLo has helped her become more confident teaching public relations to her students. "I'm working with people more as a practitioner," she says. She believes that the store also reflects what Rivier teaches in the FYS program. "Our primary focus is dignity of the human being," she says. When you respect humans, sustainability follows."

For more information, visit www.falalo.com. ■

* **JENNIFER LISKOW** is Rivier's Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications and teaches in the College's Professional Communications program. Jennifer earned her bachelor's in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master's in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features and essays published. She serves on the Board of Directors for NH Roller Derby, the state's first competitive flat-track roller derby league.