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By Paige Wisner

Living Their Dreams

PART 3 OF A SERIES: CHICAGO WOMEN 30 & UNDER: | Success is a natural by-product when your passion becomes your business

This week, the Sun-Times is celebrating women of a certain age: 30 and under. While achievement is admirable no matter how old you are, we are invigorated by their youthful successes. It takes a strong person to seize her dreams without hesitation. Here are five examples.

Anna Fong, 27

DESIGNER

There's never a "perfect time" to launch a collection, Fong realized. So she just did it. The Columbia College graduate was inspired by black and gold for her fall designs. This spring's designs are about the femininity and strength of ballerinas, with flirty sundresses and glamorous cocktail dresses. She's already dressed actress Nadine Velazquez and former Miss Universe Dayanara Torres. Soon Fong's work will be appearing on a curve near you.

Carolyn Defrin, 29

DRAMA QUEEN

Critics couldn't rave enough about the actress in "The Sparrow," in which Defrin played a high school outcast who could fly. After graduating from Northwestern and studying in London, Defrin helped found the House Theatre. Dramatic even in her off time, she feels lucky, she says, to be terrified by every project she's taken on. "I am compelled by hot air balloons and volcanoes," she says. "I am inspired by my fellow peers, and though I long for heroes in the political stratosphere, I deem the creation of epic stories in grungy-hip warehouses to be a hopeful surrogate."

Dixie Tipton, 30

MUSICAL TASTEMAKER

She has a background in classical piano, competed as a figure skater and was a finalist for "The Apprentice." But these days Tipton is devoting her considerable energy to music, as the regional promotion manager for Epic Records. She works with radio stations, "getting them excited to play our music," says Tipton. She is rumored to have a golden touch,

promoting the Fray, Natasha Bedingfield, Sean Kingston and Jennifer Lopez. Not bad for a little girl who once blew all her money on a Huey Lewis T-shirt.

Gardenia Rangel, 27

PILSEN POINT PERSON

Fiesta del Sol is a four-day event showcasing entertainment, art and food, with more than 250 volunteers, bringing more than a million visitors to the Pilsen neighborhood -- and it's up to Rangel to put it together every year. She is proud of being a first-generation Latina and the only woman in her family to earn a bachelor's degree. With all the funds she helps pour into Pilsen, the title on her business card could read "Catalyst for Change."

Genevieve Thiers, 29

ENTREPRENEUR AND ARTIST

With more than 3,500 baby-sitting gigs under her belt, Thiers wondered if there wasn't a better way to match parents and caregivers. Now her Sittercity.com has 12 full-time employees, more than 150,000 baby-sitters nationwide, and plans to go international. In her spare time? She helped found the OperaModa, which performs modern American operas in Chicago. Yes, she sings, too.