

take weekly,” Dowling says. He describes his line of silkscreened T-shirts, hoodies and tanks, as well as embroidered snapback hats and accessories, as “stealth style,” or coded clothing.

“Which means it’s not out and in your face,” he explains. “Instead of a shirt saying ‘I am transgender,’ it is like a symbol or an image or a funny slogan that’s stealth.”

For example, one of Dowling’s first and most popular T-shirts, the “Super T,” riffs on the Superman logo, replacing the “S” with a “T.” Other apparel is silkscreened with a human face transforming into a lion, a shapeshifter. All silk-screening Dowling does by hand in their garage studio.

Point 5cc is as much an advocacy endeavor as an entrepreneurial one for Dowling. He started the company in 2012 while living in Florida to raise money for surgery.

“It was actually kind of organically started because I needed to raise money for my top surgery, which is the removal of breast tissue, and then they make your chest look more masculine,” he says.

Out of pocket, top surgery will cost \$6,000-plus, and not all insurance companies cover the surgery in full, and some not at all. “The ones who do, they don’t cover good surgeons; they cover the mediocre guys who are just getting into it,” he says. “You could take a chance on scarring for the rest of your life going to one doctor, or you could save up your own cash and go to a good doctor that would actually make it look good.”

Dowling was reluctant about crowd-funding the cost of surgery through sites like Kickstarter, a common practice in the transgender community, he says, because

**EUGENEANS
SIOBHAN
TEAHAN AND
REX HUNNEL
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POINT 5CC
HATS AND
‘SHAPE
SHIFTER’
HOODIES**



the community has a much higher rate of poverty, about 14 percent of the population.

So he started making the “Super T” shirts, selling them for \$20 a pop, as well as accepting private donations. Within six months he had raised the money for surgery, but the shirts had become so popular he decided to continue.

“I wanted to make sure I could give back to the people who gave to me,” he says. Then he thought, “Why don’t I just save a portion of the money and donate it at the end of each year to somebody who’s trying to get surgery?” Point 5cc has now donated thousands of dollars to others trying to get the procedure.

“A lot of people have picked up on the company now,” Dowling notes of the viral image’s aftermath. “The momentum is still moving. It’s pretty crazy.”

Many in the community and the media say the photo was a major breakthrough in dismantling the stigma surrounding transgender bodies. Ballard says there is still a lot of education to be done in mainstream culture about the trans community.

“I think we have a weird notion that we wouldn’t be attractive,” Ballard says of society’s preconceived notions of trans people. “I get, ‘You don’t look trans’ a lot. But I *am* trans and this is what I look like. Clearly your idea is off.”

There is much work to be done on issues affecting the trans community: According to the Human Rights Campaign, transgender people are the most targeted group in hate crimes; in 32 states (not including Oregon), employers can still fire transgender people for their identity; inadequate health insurance and care — the list goes on and on. But Dowling has seen a promising shift.

“There was no ‘transgender’ five years ago, which is funny to say because I think, in people’s minds, a lot of people think ‘Oh, Laverne Cox and Chaz Bono.’ They can name a couple people, but those still are within the last couple years,” he says, referring to one of the stars of *Orange Is the New Black* and Cher and Sonny Bono’s son.

“Everyone deserves to be seen. Transgender deserves a space on the shelf.” ■

For more information about Dowling and Ballard’s work, visit point5cc.com and ftmmagazine.com

Sweet Life Pâtisserie

March desserts of the month



White Chocolate Mint Grasshopper Cheesecake
topped with chocolate ganache



Lemon Meringue Pie
gluten-free optional



Irish Coffee
French vanilla cake
whiskey and coffee syrup
Irish cream whipped cream
gluten-free optional



Oatmeal Stout Cupcake
with Minkasi Oatmeal Stout
malt-infused whipped cream

Gluten-, Egg- and Dairy-free Desserts of the Month



Cherry Almond Pie
egg- dairy- and gluten-free



Mint Chocolate Cupcake
egg- dairy- and gluten-free

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