

Tessa Koller

In 2008, Tessa Koller earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from one of the most prestigious art schools in the country, The Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. During her transition to adulthood, she learned she had 22Q11.2 Deletion Syndrome. At the time of her diagnosis, she felt like it was an end. With a new awareness and an answer to the multiple symptoms that plagued her as an infant and child, Tessa turned to what she knows best: art. She learned that with challenges come tremendous strength and new knowledge makes us smarter about our health, our lifestyle choices and the paths we choose to travel. For Tessa, this was especially true. Since college, she has actively pursued clothing design and writing — co-hosted fashion fundraisers with 22Q causes, collaborated with Hollywood actor and comedian Jim Gaffigan and his wife who kindly supported a 22Q/VCFS fundraiser in 2012. Former C.E.O. of the Huffington Post, Arianna Huffington personally invited Tessa to write for her national journal, Thrive Global, along with Tony Robbins and multiple notable authors and celebrities to date. Additionally, Tessa mentors the disability community by writing for The Mighty, which reaches millions of readers a month, another platform she uses to raise awareness of the syndrome. Through fashion, art, and writing, Tessa utilizes her skills to provide hope, encouragement, and influence to those living with 22Q11.2 Deletion Syndrome, heart disease, chronic pain fibromyalgia, and much more. To boot, she manages a successful tailoring and alterations business where she transforms ready-to-wear and any formal or bridal wear. It is her hope that her story shows you that you can reach your potential and lead a happy and successful independent life.