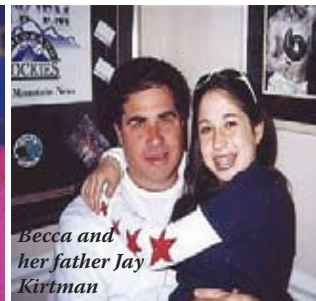




Becca at 3 years old



Becca and her father Jay Kirtman

Becca's Closet

A LEGACY/LITTLE THINGS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Story and Photos by Christine Rose

There are people who have spent such a short time on this earth, yet have made such a profound impact on so many lives. Rebecca Kirtman was one of these people.

Although a prom dress may not seem like a big thing in the scope of life – Rebecca Kirtman believed that, “Little things can make a big difference.”

When Rebecca was a freshman at Plantation High School in Davie, she heard about a school that was sponsoring a dress drive for an under-served school, so that the girls would be able to attend their prom.

Rebecca (or “Becca” as she was called by her friends) thought that no girl should be prohibited from enjoying her prom or homecoming, just because she could not afford to purchase a dress. She launched her own dress drive! In Becca’s sophomore year, she single-handedly collected and distributed over 250 dresses to needy girls, so that they could attend and enjoy their proms. Not only did Becca solicit private donations, but she had the wherewithal to directly contact dress manufacturer Alfred Angelo.

Tragically Rebecca Kirtman was killed in a car accident on August 20, 2003 when she was still in high school. Her family, friends and volunteers joined forces to carry on Becca’s dream. *Becca’s Closet* is her legacy.

According to their web site, www.beccascloset.org, Becca’s Closet is a national non-profit organization that provides formal dresses and accessories to female high school students who cannot afford to purchase them.

Becca’s Closet has a storefront in the Festival Flea Market in Pompano Beach. The space is generously donated by Danny and Leslie Shooster, the owners of the Festival Flea Market. In addition, there is a warehouse in Plantation to help store stock.

The store is jammed to the rafters with racks that hold a rainbow assortment of plastic-sheathed dresses of the latest fashion and style. Cheerful volunteers buzz around the maze of racks in assembly line fashion, methodically unboxing, sorting and hanging dresses like busy bees in a hive. The mood is jovial and punctuated with plenty of light-hearted wise-cracking and fun, but make no mistake . . . this is serious business. Stock is rotated to other chapters and special care is taken, so that no girl from the same school ever wears the same dress to the same event.

The small army of volunteers periodically holds up dresses and either nods with approval or dismisses a dress with a shake of the head and a cluck of disapproval. The dress is then either hung with care on an overstuffed clothing rack or banished and loaded into a box to be retired and designated as a permanent wallflower, or rotated to another chapter.

Female high school students who reside in South Florida and demonstrate financial need of a dress for a special occasion such as Homecoming, Prom or a Military Ball are able to go the interactive web site www.beccascloset.org and fill out a form. A volunteer will then contact the individual to set an appointment to go and try on wardrobe. Each girl is assisted by two volunteers who help her select the right dress and choose accessories. While the girls are allowed to keep their outfits, many elect to return the outfits and some insist on offering a donation.

Those who reside outside of the South Florida area are directed to the “active chapters” page of the web site and can contact the chapter closest to their region.

Becca’s Closet is always looking for gently-used or new dresses, accessories and shoes. They especially are in need of very small sizes (0-2) and plus sized dresses (16-30). Donations in the South Florida area can be dropped off to any Bank United branch, Beverly’s Jewelers or Levinson Jewelers. In addition, wardrobe can be mailed to Becca’s Closet, Inc. at 151 North Nob Hill Road, Suite 280, Plantation, FL, 33324.

Dresses must be of a current style (made within the last five years) and in excellent condition.

Many new dresses are donated by Alfred Angelo, Vera Wang, Boca Raton Bridal & Consultants and Maria Alexander in Miami.

In addition to providing dresses for needy young ladies, this non-profit organization also offers scholarships. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need and exemplary community service. Fundraisers are held throughout the year to help finance the scholarship program as well as the other financial needs of the foundation. The organization is completely run by non-paid volunteers. There is an annual luncheon and golf tournament.

The next fundraiser will be Becca’s Closet Annual Golf Tournament, a celebrity golf match that will be hosted by former Miami Dolphin, Kim Bokamper. The tournament will be

*Elisa Brady, a Senior
at Northwest Christian
Academy, Miami*



*Saimy Plaiser, a
Junior at Pompano
Beach High School*



*Shelby Todd,
a Freshman at
Seminole Ridge
Community
High School*



Ariel Kendall,
a Junior at
PineCrest



Happy Volunteers at Becca's Closet. Over the years Becca's Closet has collected and distributed over 50,000 dresses.



held at Pembroke Lakes Golf Course on Friday, **April 17, 2009**. The day will consist of tournament registration, a barbecue lunch, an afternoon of golf, a cocktail reception, a silent auction, raffle and an awards presentation.

Various sponsorship opportunities are available at different dollar and recognition levels. To RSVP for the golf tournament, please contact Carrie Rubin, (561) 445-0399. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please also contact Carrie Rubin or Jay Kirtman (954) 673-5058.

Becca's Closet is fairly well-established in Broward and Miami Dade Counties, but the organization is interested in finding a liaison in the Palm Beach County school system. The liaison would assist in coordinating and spreading the word about Becca's closet, so that young ladies in need of formal attire for prom or homecoming could be directed to the foundation. In addition, the foundation is interested in getting Palm Beach guidance counselors involved, so that they could assist with providing scholarship information to deserving students.

In today's economic times, the directors are anticipating an even greater need. Jay Kirtman, father of Rebecca says, "We need all the help we can get. With this current economy, I am afraid that donations will suffer."

Becca's Closet is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. They are able to provide a tax donation receipt upon request. If you are interested in making a cash donation, checks can be mailed to Becca's Closet, 151 North Nob Hill Rd, Suite 280, Plantation, FL 33324. Or you can make a credit card donation by going to www.justgive.org.

If you would like to get involved with Becca's Closet by starting a chapter, you can go online to the web site and fill out the *Start a Chapter* form. Chapters must be started and run by students with adult supervision and affiliated with a school, community or religious organization.

Over the years Becca's Closet has collected and distributed over 50,000 dresses. Becca's dream of helping others has grown by leaps and bounds. Won't you help perpetuate the spirit of Becca's dream and honor her memory? Help give back by donating your time, dresses, making a cash donation or becoming a sponsor or attending one of their annual fundraisers. As Becca said, "Little Things Can Make a Big Difference." Make a Difference today!

For further information about Becca's Closet, please visit their web site <www.beccascloset.org>.

Christine Rose is an award-winning commercial and fine portrait photographer based in Wellington. Her specialties include fine portraiture, headshots, model comps and portfolios, fashion, beauty, lifestyle, events, equestrian and more. She has been exhibited in such venues as the Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, The Palm Beach Photographic Centre, Delray Beach, The Cornell Museum, Delray Beach. Her work is held in private collections throughout the United States, Europe and South America.

To view more of her work, see her main web site www.lilangel-photos.com. For booking information, contact 561 333 9549 / 561 543 0466.

Note: Shelby Todd's make-up done by Make-up artist Morina Simpson. Specialties include bridal, event make-up, print and editorial. For Booking information please contact 484-318-0798. Additional work available online at www.modelmayhem.com/636071