

## Becca's Closet program at Centenary College gives away free prom dresses

By Kelly Huth

April 06, 2010, 9:36AM

**Centenary College** will give away free prom dresses to girls who need them in five open houses, as part of the Becca's Closet Initiative.

Centenary has nearly 500 gently used dresses, shoes and accessories to give away to junior and senior girls with a valid high school ID.

**Becca's Closet** is a program started in South Florida with local chapters across the country. Rebecca Kirtman, a high school student, wanted to find a way to provide prom dresses to those who couldn't afford them. Shortly after the program started, Kirtman passed away in 2003. Her family and friends continue the program in her honor.

Kristen McKitish, adviser for Centenary's chapter of Becca's Closet, said the college's group is staffed by fashion design and fashion merchandising majors, who help girls select their prom outfits.

**"If you asked me last year if it would've been popular, I never would've guessed we'd give out so many,"** McKitish said of the 35 dresses distributed in their inaugural year. **"We want every girl to feel special. Shopping for a prom dress is a milestone in their lives."**

McKitish started the program as a way of promoting civic engagement in her academic foundation class. Since its inception, McKitish said the program doubled in size and is gaining momentum. It draws girls from as far away as Long Island.

**"Some girls travel out of county or state because it's a sensitive issue,"** she said.

**Centenary will hold open houses on the following days at 400 Jefferson St., Hackettstown:**

**5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday**

**10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday**

**10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 24**

**5 p.m. to 8 p.m. April 30**

**10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. May 1**

Visit [beccascloset.org](http://beccascloset.org) and click on the Centenary College link to set up private appointments or to donate dresses.

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Mary Hawes, 17, of Bangor, pulls out a dress to try on during the YWCA of Bethlehem's Prom Dress Day held March 27, 2010, at the State Theatre in Easton.