

## Closet queens

by: JASON ASHLEY WRIGHT World Scene Writer  
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They haven't been to their own proms yet, but Natalie Charney and Lisa Marcum have helped dozens of girls go to theirs.

As proms or homecomings are usually the only occasions high school students have to dress up, "I think it's always important for girls to look pretty and feel confident about themselves," said Charney, 17, a junior at Booker T. Washington High School.

That's why she and Marcum, a 17-year-old junior at Edison Preparatory School, coordinate a local chapter of Becca's Closet. It's one of three in Tulsa, the organization says on its national Web site, [tulsaworld.com/beccascloset](http://tulsaworld.com/beccascloset).

Becca's Closet provides formal attire for free to high school students who otherwise would not be able to attend their proms, homecomings or similar events. The organization was created in memory of Rebecca Kirtman, a Florida high school student who launched a dress drive to provide prom dresses and accessories to high school girls who couldn't afford them. By the next spring, she had collected and donated more than 250 dresses.

Kirtman was killed at age 16 in an automobile accident in August 2003. But her legacy lives on through the many Becca's Closet chapters throughout the country, including the one run by buddies Charney and Marcum. Hillary Holt coordinates one listed as Christ the Redeemer Church, and Tiffany Grant coordinates Prom Wishes Inc., according to the nonprofit's Web site.

The chapters accept donations of new or gently worn gowns from individuals and stores.

One of the local retailers who have donated to one of the local Becca's Closet chapters is Facchinos Bridal and Formal Attire, 4910 W. Kenosha St., in Broken Arrow.

"Prom is one of the most important things up to this point in a girl's life," said Facchianos' owner, Jennifer Thompson. "Girls naturally want to have the nicest dress at prom and will shop all over to find the perfect dress."

When Holt approached Thompson about Becca's Closet, the store owner donated some dress styles she couldn't re-order.

"What better way to make them useful again," Thompson said. "It makes me feel good to know that a girl who maybe couldn't go to prom otherwise could now go."

Charney and Marcum said they had helped several girls so far this year. Their total for prom season last year was about 40.

"It's pretty important," Marcum said about prom. "You look forward to it as a kid, and you'll remember prom when you're older."

She and Charney said they started helping out with Becca's Closet during their freshman year when Genevieve Dukes, a student at Holland Hall, was coordinating it. After Dukes graduated, they took over as coordinators.

The two oversee a donated storefront in the back of a midtown shopping center. As many local proms are just weeks away, they've been busy most Saturdays, the day the Tulsa World popped in.

Two long racks — one on the left, the other on the right — hold hundreds of clothes in myriad styles, lengths and colors. The gowns are arranged in sizes, which range from 2 to 14 and up. A time or two, they've spied a Vera Wang dress in the mix, they said, as well as tags reading BCBG or Saks Fifth Avenue.

"We want to give as many dresses to girls who need them," Charney said. "But it's really hard to put ourselves out there so that they know."

For a girl to get a dress from Becca's Closet, she has to either be recommended by her school counselor or pick up a flier from the store — which you have to make an appointment to visit, by the way. That's for both safety and privacy.

"It's confidential," Charney said. "You can come to our store, and we won't tell anyone your name or situation."

She and Marcum have quite a few small sizes, but they need more dresses that are sizes 12 or larger, they said.

If you'd like to donate to any of the local Becca's Closet chapters, visit [tulsaworld.com/beccascloset](http://tulsaworld.com/beccascloset). Just click on "get involved," then "active chapters" to find one near you, as well as the appropriate contact information.

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### **Becca's Closet**

Three local chapters of Becca's Closet are available for high school girls who can't afford prom dresses, as well as those who would like to donate new or gently worn formal wear to the cause.

Here is the contact information for these groups, courtesy of the nonprofit organization's national Web site, [tulsaworld.com/beccascloset](http://tulsaworld.com/beccascloset):

First on the list is Christ the Redeemer Church, which serves young women in Union Public Schools. Send e-mail to Hillary Holt at [markholt1@cox.net](mailto:markholt1@cox.net).

Another chapter is coordinated by Natalie Charney and Lisa Marcum. Their e-mail address is [beccasclosettulsa@gmail.com](mailto:beccasclosettulsa@gmail.com).

The third is Prom Wishes Inc., coordinated by Tiffany Grant. Reach her via e-mail at [cbgrant\\_16@hotmail.com](mailto:cbgrant_16@hotmail.com).

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### **Prom 2010**

Black, gold and silver may have ruled this year's award season, but prom-goers' redcarpet moments are bound to be much more vivid.

Bright and jewel tones are the most popular, said Jennifer Thompson, owner of Facchianos Bridal and Formal Attire on the northeast corner of 71st Street and Garnett Road. "Purple, for sure. Yellow, lime green, bright orange and lots of fuchsia."

Other trends include prints, one-shoulder silhouettes, flowing fabrics and styles with builtin necklaces, Thompson said.

But who looks best in what?

Prints work well for all figures because they can show a nice figure off, as well as disguise some assets girls are trying to hide, she said. Flowing fabrics when fitted properly can usually hide hips and thighs if that is something a girl is trying to cover.

"When girls are ample in the bustline, I think that oneshoulder is great since it covers cleavage but still gives an appearance of a strapless dress," said Thompson, who often reminds girls to accent their best features.

"I had a girl yesterday that was broad in her shoulders and quite self-conscious about it," she said. With that body type, wearing a fuller skirt helps balance nice, strong shoulders.

For coverage, Thompson would opt for a dress that has a matching shawl, which helps cover the upper arm or the back.

For bottom coverage, choose a fuller A-line dress or ball gown, especially if you have a smaller waist.

“Choosing flowing fabrics will help with that,” she said. Broadshouldered girls should stay away from halter styles, which just accentuate the shoulders.

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**Associate Images:**



**Lisa Marcum (left) and Natalie Charney of Becca's Closet pose with prom dresses at their store. Becca's Closet provides new and gently worn gowns for girls who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend the prom and other formal events. STEPHEN HOLMAN / Tulsa World**




**Lisa Marcum (center) and Natalie Charney of Becca's Closet sort through prom dresses at their store.**



**Bright and jewel tones are popular this prom season.**

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