

The Herald News

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STYLE AND SUBSTANCE: Tiverton teens give less fortunate 'their Cinderella moment'

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TIVERTON — Brittany Rothstein hopes every girl gets to have her Cinderella moment.

The Tiverton High School senior has teamed up with her friend Ayesha Patel to form a local chapter of Becca's Closet, a nonprofit organization that provides formalwear to high school students who otherwise would not be able to attend their prom or homecoming.

"Every girl wants to look pretty," said Rothstein. "We've all seen 'Cinderella,' 'Beauty and the Beast' and all those movies. Everybody wants to give a girl their Cinderella moment. I think everyone should have a chance to feel pretty in high school."

Becca's Closet was inspired by Rebecca Kirtman, a high school freshman in Davie, Fla., who began collecting prom dresses to give away to girls who could not afford to purchase them. Kirtman died in an auto accident in 2003 at age 16, but her family continued the collections in her memory.

"We started last summer badgering people to give us their prom dresses," said Rothstein. "Slowly, the teachers brought in piles of dresses and the students brought in their dresses after the prom last year."

The duo also had to fill out tons of paperwork to become an official Becca's Closet chapter.

They secured a spot in North Tiverton to serve as a "store" where students could shop for their promwear. Rothstein and Patel estimate they have spent more than 200 hours apiece on the project.

Cathy-Ann Winston, a guidance counselor and project advisor at Tiverton High, said she's impressed with the girls' dedication to the project.

"It's been great to see how they've grown and worked together on this," said Winston. "It's amazing."

The local Becca's Closet project picked up steam two weeks ago, when Rothstein received an e-mail from a homeless shelter in West Warwick. The shelter had received more than 300 gowns donated by a local dress shop. The shelter couldn't use the dresses, and y asked Rothstein if she could.

"It was so great," said Rothstein. "I brought my tiny car and threw as many dresses as I could into it. I couldn't even see out the back window."

The shelter also allowed Rothstein and Patel to use racks to hang the more than 500 dresses they had collected. Now, the duo are off and running.

Over the last couple of weeks, Rothstein and Patel have worked around the clock to get their shop suitable for showcasing the dresses. They have put up flyers all over their school to spread the word about the project. They have also publicized at Durfee and have gotten some interest from Middletown. They also received a commitment from Delken Dry Cleaners in Fall River, which has volunteered to clean 20 dresses per month.

"What is nice is that they set it up to make it like a real shopping experience where kids can come and other kids don't know they are going," said Winston. "We wanted them to have the privacy."

According to Rothstein and Patel, they have also collected some shorter dresses that could be used for other occasions. They are still searching for shoes, pocketbooks, jewelry and other accessories that can be included with the prom gowns.

Anyone interested in shopping at the Tiverton Becca's Closet can send an e-mail to tivbeccascloset@yahoo.com. Appointments are required to shop for dresses. Rothstein and Patel estimate they will run the store until the end of the school year.

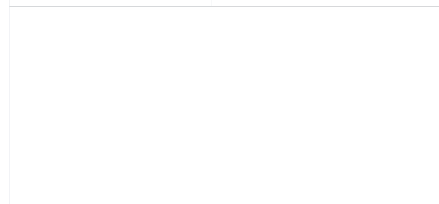
Although they've only been open for business for one week, Rothstein and Patel have already given away close to 10 dresses. "To see a girl coming out looking so beautiful in her dress makes it worthwhile," said Patel. "Some of them were so happy they found their dress that they were crying."

E-mail Derek Vital at dvital@heraldnews.com.

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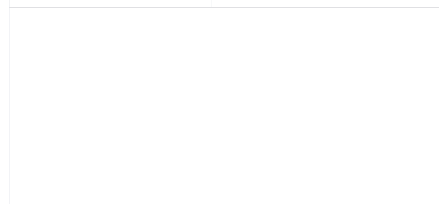
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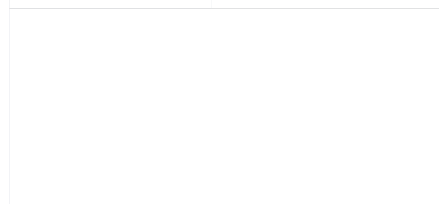
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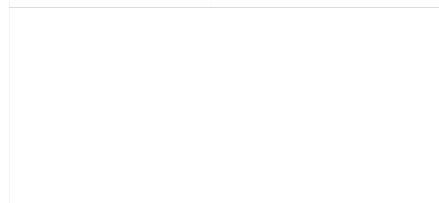
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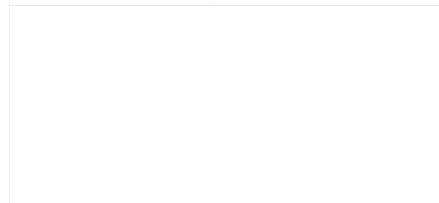
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Congratulations on a great project! It is nice to read about such wonderful young ladies.
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katelyn david is a beauty! miss you!
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yes she is imma look her up on facebook! haha jk this is just more prrof that good people do good things!
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Stupid dresses.....
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Great work girls. I wish I had some dresses for you. I will pass the word, I know people with closets!!!
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Fabulous!
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7 Years Ago I was Widowed, While Going Through My late Wife's Clothing I Kept thinking that Someone could Benefit from her Dresses & Business Suits & Such. She was 38 when she passed away Suddenly (Yes..Tragically) And her Taste in Clothing was Impeccable! A Friend Put m in touch with the 'Fairy Godmother Project' in Taunton. They Took All Her Fancy Dresses & Evening Wear to be used at their Project for the High School Girls in Taunnton who could not afford a Pron Gown. they also Took Her Business Suits & like New Jeans & Such to be donated to Battered Women's Shelters to help these women who may have only had the Clothes on their back when they escaped a Dangerous Relationship. I Support these Projects 100000% ! Please support these Projects!!!! It made me Feel Good to Know that Someone Looked Beautiful on Prom Night or a Battered Woman Had a new Suit to wear to a Job Interview. It Helped me Cope & Deal with the Saddest Time in My Life....

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