



The Giving Gown Foundation collects new and like new formal dresses for area teens

THE PRINCESS AND *The Prom*

Cy-Fair's Giving Gown Foundation Makes Dreams Come True

Written by Stephanie Donovan Select Photos Courtesy of the Giving Gown Foundation

Spring ushers in prom season in the Cy-Fair area, as thousands of local teens don gorgeous dresses and dapper tuxedos to take part in a true American rite of passage. Many girls dream of the day they will have their princess moment at their high school prom. But what if your family was one of those hit hardest by the current economy? What if the day came and you did not have the means to get a dress for that special day? What if you were faced with missing

out on prom altogether? Thanks to one local organization, Cy-Fair area teens may not have to miss out on the glitz and fun of prom night. The Giving Gown Foundation is a non-profit organization collecting donations of new and "like-new" formal gowns and accessories to provide for free to high school girls who would otherwise be unable to attend their prom.



Volunteer seamstresses help alter gowns for each teen if needed



The foundation works with local organizations to host dress drives



Fairy godmothers help teens find the right dress for prom

Giving More than Gowns

The two selfless queens behind Giving Gown are founders JoAnn Trchalek and Adina Walker. In their first year, the duo helped dress 91 girls for prom, and last year, the number of gown beneficiaries jumped to 330, as word of the group's mission spread. Every year in March on boutique day, volunteers distribute dresses to the lucky recipients, deemed princesses. The foundation opens up registration for potential princesses starting in the winter months. To qualify for a gown, teens must be a junior or senior in high school, fill out the form or call, and have a valid school ID or a letter from their counselor, and dresses must be used for the girl's prom. Girls interested in receiving a gown should register on the organization's website, givinggown.org.

Girls who have received gowns and return to donate a gown or help new teens find the right dress are called Giving Gown's "fairy godmothers." Carolina Moscoso, a 2009 Klein Collins High School graduate, experienced a double benefit from the Giving Gown, receiving as a princess one year and serving as a fairy godmother the next. "The interesting part is that I signed up to be a volunteer because, as fashion club president of my school, I wanted to impact lives," she says. Then, she got a call from Walker telling her the organization wanted to provide her with a dress that year. "I felt so beautiful in my dress," Moscoso says. "When I was ready to leave for prom, I said a little prayer for these ladies who are so selfless that they would take the shirt off their backs to make a princess feel beautiful and comfortable with herself."

Transforming Lives

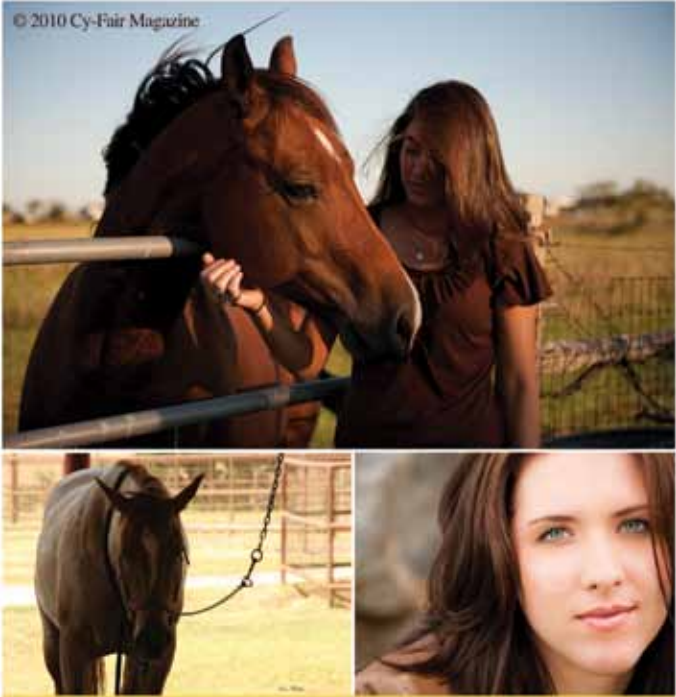
Generating a feeling of beauty and confidence in a young woman is high on the list of goals for the foundation. The organization has witnessed many touching transformations over the past few years, but one memory holds prominent in Walker's experience. "We helped a young lady who was living out of a van with her mother," says Walker. "She got up each day and went to school - no home, no bed, but she still went to school." When the foundation didn't have much for the girl's fuller-figured size at that time, Walker was determined to find a solution. Once the girl found a gown that she loved, Walker had one of the group's seamstresses measure and remake the dress for her. "There were tears of joy and a lot of laughter," says Walker.

Become a Fairy Godmother

The Giving Gown Foundation exists based on generous donations of dresses from the community and dedicated sponsors and volunteers who are willing to help out. The group has gown drop-off locations all over the city, with a complete list available on its website, and accepts dress donations until boutique day. Monetary donations help defray operational costs, including purchasing equipment and gowns for girls whose sizes may not have been donated.

Walker says the foundation always needs volunteers for their big boutique day, especially seamstresses. She adds that in her experience, Giving Gown princesses are all very appreciative of their dresses and accessories. "They have all been thrilled and very thankful," she says. "They cannot believe that it is all theirs to keep - for free!" To get involved, call The Giving Gown Foundation at 832-381-6565 or email info@givinggown.org. If you know of a Cy-Fair organization doing extraordinary work, email editor@cyfairmagazine.com. CFM

STEPHANIE DONOVAN is a freelance writer and mother of two living in the Cypress area. She now wants to get her "little princess" involved with the Giving Gown Foundation when she is a teen.

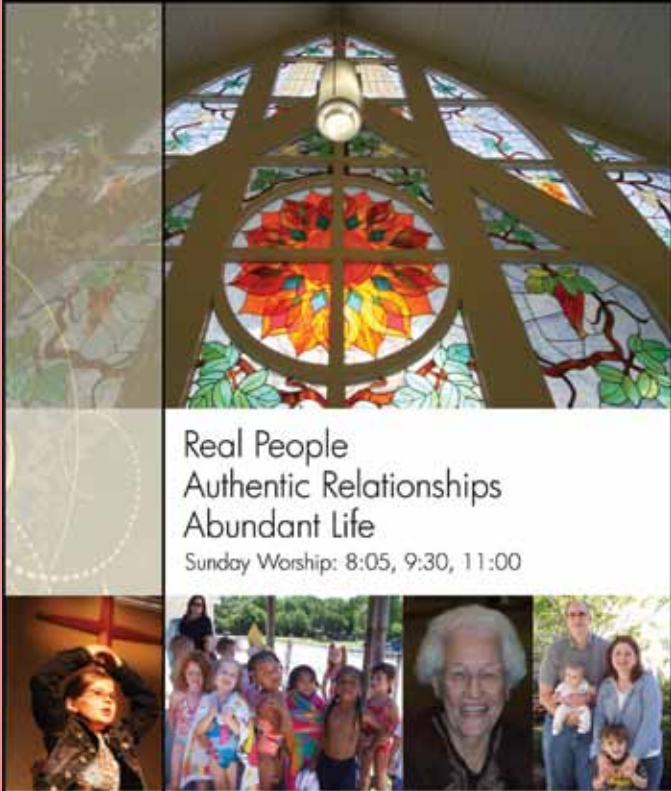


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