

# Cinderella's Closet



Jessica Selby • Daily Times

Adrianna Smith, Kayla Denton and Lynn Swain try on and display some of the dresses available for girls to borrow for the prom.

# Coventry teachers, Lynn Swain, Courtney Hughes, team up to make prom affordable

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The prom is something that most young girls look forward to throughout their entire high school career.

But with the cost of everything in society rising, the dance can sometimes be out of reach for some.

Adrianna Smith, a senior at Coventry High School, said that she is actually aware of a handful of students from the school that said that they aren't going to be able to go to prom this weekend because they can't afford to.

"I feel really bad about that because everyone should have the opportunity to go to their prom," Smith.

Two teachers at Coventry High School apparently felt the same way. So the duo teamed up and created a program to alleviate the pressure of price when it comes time to planning for the prom in hopes that every female student that wants to attend their senior prom this weekend will be able to.

Lynn Swain, the early childhood education teacher at Coventry High School, teamed up with Courtney Hughes, one of the reading specialists at the school, to cre-

ate what has come to be known as Cinderella's Closet.

The two teachers were able to secure a small space inside the school that remains locked and secured. Behind the thick wooden door to that space the teachers have close to 80 dresses that were donated to the school for the cause and the students in the school have been invited to sort through the collection and find one they want to wear to their prom.

The way the program works, Swain said, is that there is no actual fee for utilizing the dress. She said that the students just have to sign a contract guaranteeing their return of the item.

Swain said that the students are even allowed to have alterations done on the dresses to make them "just perfect" for them for their prom night. The dresses just have to be returned within three weeks of the event with a receipt from having it dry cleaned.

"Many of these dresses that we have still have the price tags on them and they average anywhere between \$180 to \$350," Swain said. "I can't imagine having to spend that kind of money on a dress that these girls are probably only going to wear that one time."

Kayla Denton, one of the seniors at Coventry High School, has already picked out her prom gown from the selection available in Cinderella's Closet. She said that she tried on a few of the dresses but in the end selected a coral colored gown that had intricate bead work on the front and

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# Dresses for the prom can be borrowed from this special closet

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back of the bodice. The price tag on the dress read \$305.

"Before I heard about Cinderella's Closet I planned on going shopping to buy a dress, but I never could have afforded to get one like this," she said. "Especially considering I will probably never wear the dress again."

"We still have to get the jewelry and the shoes and rent a limo or make sure that we have transportation, so not to have to worry about paying for the actual dress, especially when they cost as much as they do, it's a big weight off our chest," Smith said.

Swain said that all of the dresses that are currently in their collection came from a single donation. She said that Hughes' mother, the owner of Three Sisters Boutique, located in Exeter, donated the dresses, all of which were brand new from her store. She said that the plan is to take in more dresses if people want to donate them, but is excited to start the program off with as big a selection as they already have.

The students that have reserved dresses for the prom this weekend said that they too were impressed with the selection. Smith, who has reserved a light blue gown for the senior ball, said that she didn't know what to expect when she first arrived to meet with Swain and Hughes for her fitting, but was surprisingly shocked when she came in and was able to pick through so

many different styles, sizes, colors and types of dresses.

"I was surprised by how many different sizes she had," Smith said. "I thought because I might need something bigger, they weren't going to have anything in my size, but there was a lot to choose from."

The selection also impressed Denton.

"I was expecting to have just a few regular like sun dresses nothing this formal," Denton said.

Many dresses have been reserved for the prom this weekend. Swain said that she was thrilled that the students really embraced the program, but hopes that next year even more will.

She said that no one should feel uncomfortable about it either as the closet is open to everyone regardless of their financial status.

The closet has been open to students by appointment after school. Swain said that either herself or Hughes volunteered their time to stay after and help the girls with their selection and to assist with proper fittings.

Swain said that the program could always use donations and would love for anyone in the community with formal evening wear that they do not want anymore to donate it to Cinderella's Closet for use in the program. The dresses, she said, just need to be clean and in good condition.

Donations for next year's senior class can be dropped off at Coventry High School, located at 40 Reservoir Road.