

MOTHERS TRUST FOUNDATION

Pop Up Prom Shoppe for Education **HISTORY**



It's more than a dress...

WHAT IS THE MTF POP UP PROM SHOPPE FOR EDUCATION?

In 2018, a Lake County high school social worker contacted Mothers Trust Foundation (MTF) seeking spare prom dresses for low-income students. With over 100 dresses collected from family and friends, we hosted our first "Pop Up Prom Shoppe" in that school's office. Moved by students' emotional reactions, we formally launched the MTF Pop-Up Prom Shoppe for Education in 2019. Instead of being need-based, we opened it up to ALL Lake County high school students, removing the stigma of needing a free dress. Now, it's for anyone who wants one!

WHAT MAKES THIS EVENT SO UNIQUE?

OUR PARTNERS, THE FUN ATMOSPHERE AND OUR NOT-SO-SECRET EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT!

On the surface, it's a fun dress giveaway. Underneath? It's about getting students on a college campus and showing them that college could be for them! Since 2019, we've partnered with Zengeler Cleaners to collect formal dress donations year-round, with the goal of supporting Lake County high school students. We also collaborate with the College of Lake County (CLC) and the University Center of Lake County (UCLC) to provide local students exceptional educational opportunities in their community. The event features guest speakers from both institutions, and students can take home informative flyers for their families. This year introduces a new addition—a FAFSA workshop aimed at helping families complete their forms.

OUR FRIDAY "VIP COLLEGE VISIT / PROM SHOPPE EXPERIENCE"

Because MTF is first and foremost a charitable foundation, we have developed a special event that takes place on Friday; the day before the Prom Shoppe opens to the public. All Lake County public high schools are invited, but only the first 5 responding schools can attend and are limited to 25 students each. Aimed at at-risk or low-income students, the itinerary includes official college visits to the College of Lake County and University Center of Lake County that showcase disciplines, financial aid, and scholarships and a guest speaker teaching job interview skills. All students are treated to a catered box lunch and dessert and shopping in the Pop Up Prom Shoppe with their own personal shopper!

THE 'FUN EXTRAS'

A DJ, photographers, 'personal shoppers' to assist students in finding the perfect dress and 'accessories coordinators' to help them complete their look with shoes, handbags, and jewelry are some of the over 500 volunteers that make this weekend happen! We want all students to feel beautiful, special and confident!

THE MTF GRANTS FOR SUITS

MTF offers grants to low-income Lake County high school students, providing them with suits for prom and beyond. Social workers or counselors from the schools submit grant requests after confirming the students meet MTF guidelines. MTF collaborates with Smith's Men's Store in Lake Forest, where students can choose from a selection of suits in black, dark gray, light gray, or navy. Additionally, they receive a white dress shirt, bow tie, cummerbund, and regular tie to complete their look, ensuring they are well-prepared for future job interviews or formal events.

THE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Over 500 volunteers come together to make this cherished event a reality from beginning to end! We welcome a wide array of participants, including student clubs, corporate teams, Scouts, families and more, all generously dedicating their time. They lend their support in various capacities, from sorting dresses to building dressing rooms, assisting with personal shopping, and handling other essential tasks. Every year, we witness a growing number of teams eager to join and contribute to the magic of our event!