



## Sarasota Classified Teachers Association

*"An Independent Labor Union Dedicated to the Professional Well-being of ALL Sarasota County Schools Employees"*

# Sixth season of "The Closet" free prom gowns begins today

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 20, 2015

**CONTACT:** Christine Mayer, 941-726-0002

**SARASOTA COUNTY** – Tonight (Friday) is "Opening Night" for The Closet, the Sarasota Classified/Teacher Association's sixth annual prom dress giveaway, and a record number of dresses are available for Sarasota County teens.

"We have almost 1,500 dresses available this year, more than we've ever had," said organizer Chris Mayer, vice president of the SCTA. "Several consignment shops in town donated dresses this year, and they're beautiful!"

This year's dress giveaway takes place along Beneva Road between SCTI and Triad, in a building known as "Building 29." Teens are encouraged to swing by from 5 to 8 p.m. tonight to try on dresses, shoes and accessories – all donated by the community.

Mayer, a teacher at Ashton Elementary School for 36 years, created The Closet six years ago when she noticed the nationwide recession was making it difficult for families to afford extras like prom dresses.

"We just thought, it's not fair that these little girls have to take the hit for something that is not in their control," Mayer said. "We decided, 'Why don't we do something about it?'"

Other SCTA officers and staffers help collect dresses for the program year-round, and donated dresses were still flowing into the SCTA offices as recently as Wednesday. The SCTA is also funding a bus to help students from North Port High School make the trek to The Closet.

"We feel every girl should be able to go to the prom," said Pat Gardner, president of SCTA. "We want to help our girls have an experience they will remember forever."

This year's location for The Closet was made available by the school district, which is allowing Mayer and the program to use a storage area/old office suite near SCTI. Mayer spent most of Thursday cleaning and transforming the building into dressing room suites.

She expects that a minimum 990 teens already know of tonight's Opening Night through The Closet's Facebook page, Free Prom Gowns in SRQ. The dress giveaway will continue through April 28 on select days (schedule attached).

The SCTA is an independent labor union that fights for high salaries and good working conditions for all of Sarasota County' schools employees and provides ongoing professional support in the form of classes, workshops, coaching and training.

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# 2015 The Closet schedule

Friday, March 20, 2015	5 to 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 22	Noon to 4 p.m.
Tuesday, March 24	5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, March 25	5 to 8 p.m.
Thursday, March 26	5 to 8 p.m.
Monday, March 30	5 to 8 p.m.
Tuesday, March 31	5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, April 1	5 to 8 p.m.
Monday, April 6	5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, April 8	5 to 8 p.m.
Sunday, April 12	Noon to 4 p.m.
Monday, April 13	5 to 8 p.m.
Tuesday, April 14	5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday, April 18	10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monday, April 20	5 to 8 p.m.
Tuesday, April 21	5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, April 22	5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday, April 28	10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Building 29, on Beneva Road between SCTI and Triad

For information: Chris Mayer, 726-0002