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A Prom Promise in Ipswich

High school students organize formalwear resale fundraiser

By Bethany Bray - Staff Writer

IPSWICH — Have a prom or formal dress hanging in the back of your closet that you'll never wear again?

Three Ipswich High School students will be happy to take it off your hands in a fundraiser they're organizing to benefit the Lazarex Cancer Foundation.



Juniors Alex Sulkin, Morgan Riddle and Paige Sirois are collecting donations of gently used formal dresses and men's jackets starting Dec. 20. The trio will organize the donations and resell them on Jan. 15 at the high school.

All proceeds will benefit the Lazarex Foundation, a California-based nonprofit that provides resources for cancer patients given a terminal diagnosis. The fundraiser aids a good cause, gives formalwear a second life and helps those that might not be able to afford a dress at full price. "There's a whole bunch of pluses," Paige said.

Although prom is months away, Ipswich High School has a cotillion dance in January and other semiformal

dances before prom season. Dresses and men's jackets can be dropped off at Ipswich High School, 134 High St., Dec. 20 through 22 and Jan. 3 through 7 or the morning of the Jan. 15 sale. All sizes and styles will be accepted. Dry cleaning the garment is not required, but the girls ask that donations be in good shape — worn just once or twice.

On Jan. 15, dresses will be sold for \$20 each. But if there's someone who doesn't have \$20 to spare, the trio agreed they would let her have the dress for free. This is the second year the girls have organized a prom dress sale; they hope to get donations and shoppers from high schools across the North Shore this year.

As class officers, Morgan and Paige said they initially planned the sale as a "class bonding thing." Last year, they received 50 dresses and raised \$100 for the Ipswich nonprofit Bright Happy Power. This year, the trio chose to raise money for Lazarex because the charity helped Morgan's uncle, and she has seen its benefits firsthand.

In addition to community outreach, the foundation helps cancer patients who have been given a terminal diagnosis and told by their doctor there is nothing more to be done. The nonprofit defrays the costs for patients to try cancer treatments undergoing FDA clinical trials.

The foundation flew Morgan's uncle, a Shrewsbury resident, to the Philippines, where he stayed in a nice facility and underwent treatments still in trials, she said. "Lazarex gave us an extra year with him," Morgan said, "which was really nice."

Say yes to the dress!

Donations of formal dresses and men's jackets can be dropped off at the main office of Ipswich High School, 134 High St., Dec. 20 through 22 and Jan. 3 through 7.

Items will be sold on Jan. 15, 9:30 a.m. to noon, in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center at Ipswich High School. Donations will also be accepted the morning of the sale. Call 978-356-3137 with questions.