

EDUCATION

Formally speaking, program dressed for success

Fall Fashion Frenzy at Central offers affordable dresses

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

“Formally,” it’s called Fall Fashion Frenzy, a way for high school girls to look like a million bucks for \$20 or less.

All the while raising money for a priceless cause.

For the past two Fridays, the JROTC area of Central High School was transformed into a minigarment district filled with a cornucopia of floor-length, T-length and short dresses — all in a rainbow of colors and styles.

For \$20, or \$10 with a trade, young women from any Pueblo high school readying themselves for homecoming or another occasion requiring classy attire had the opportunity to take one of the snazzy outfits home.

“A lot of these girls buy dresses for homecoming and don’t want to wear them again,” said Central educator Lois Conatore-Houpe, one of the organizers of the Frenzy. “Because they don’t want to see someone wearing the same dress. So they just stay in the closet. This way, they have a way to exchange that dress and get a new one.”



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/JOHN JAQUES

Asia Jiggetts, 14, a freshman at Central High School, gets help from student Marcellous Martinez as she picks out a formal dress from the Fall Fashion Frenzy program on Friday.

The genesis of the Frenzy dates back to last spring, when a colleague donated a cache of dresses to Central.

“We didn’t have a clue what we would do with them, but we accepted them,” said Assistant Principal Destin Mehess. “And that’s how it all started.”

After a successful sale just in time for prom, the stock was

replenished by faculty and others, including the original donor, who purchased brand new dresses or donated slightly used ones — some worth as much as \$300.

“Last spring, there were so many girls interested that we decided to do it for the fall and winter events,” said Conatore-Houpe. “So that’s why we’re here.”

This time out, it was decided that proceeds of the Frenzy would be donated, through Central’s National Honor Society, to breast cancer treatment programs at St. Mary-Corwin and Parkview medical centers in honor of Central counselor Vicki McGraw, a breast cancer survivor.

“I’m pretty honored

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that they would do this for me,” McGraw said.

“She inspired us,” Mehess said of McGraw, “and she’s worked very hard on this event.”

Throughout Friday afternoon, a steady stream of browsers and buyers meticulously went through the racks looking for at least one keeper.

“I had a dress and I was curious to see what they had,” said Wildcat Robin Berger. “I’m thinking about trading it in. The dresses are cute, but I’m picky. I don’t wear dresses often, just homecoming, prom, Christmas, weddings.”

Robin’s friend, Shaelyn Valerio, was set on finding the right dress for homecoming.

“I really like this sale, because some people don’t have a lot of money to buy a brand-new dress. I’m picky, too, but I found the one I like.”

Fall Fashion Frenzy will continue from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Call 549-7300 for information.

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