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Prom dresses get second chance to dance

*BY SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
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A snip here, a tuck there might be all it takes to give a makeover to a prom dress sitting in the back of a closet somewhere. Just because an older sister or a cousin wore it once doesn't mean someone else can't "own" it if she adds touches that reflect her own style.

"It comes down to creativity and accessories. We're celebrating creativity now: Sew rosettes to the waistline or the straps of a dress; add ribbons," says Tammy Tibbetts, editor-in-chief of MyPromStyle.com.

The average cost of a new prom dress last year was \$236, according to Seventeen magazine, but it expects that number to drop this year judging from buzz from its online teen network.

Formal dresses tend to have long shelf lives because they aren't usually quite as trendy as school clothes and they certainly aren't getting worn out from use. But girls are reluctant to wear the same one in consecutive years.

So why not wear someone else's?

Ashley Greene, star of "Twilight," gave several of her party dresses, including a gold goddess number and a bright blue cocktail dress, to DonateMyDress.org because she wants them to see the light of day again. DonateMyDress.org has a local dress dropoff and pickup center. To give or inquire about getting a dress, check out Hope Closet in Livonia at www.hopecloset.com or send an e-mail to hopecloset@yahoo.com

DonateMyDress.org is a national network that distributes special-occasion outfits. Celebrity donors include Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus and Demi Lovato.

Tibbetts, who also oversees the DonateMyDress Web site, says that bridesmaid dresses, which are typically solid colors, are good candidates for tweaked prom dresses. They're almost a blank canvas, she says, but they still give you "that red-carpet moment."

Transformations can come with adding a collection of brooches to the neckline or waistband, or adding a belt. You could change the hem length, pile on necklaces or wear bright shoes, to change the focal point of the dress.

Additional Facts

Give gown to win tickets

Donate your gently worn prom dress, and you could end up in the first row of a Jonas Brothers concert.

Just bring your dress, shoes and accessories -- they must be in good shape and less than 5 years old

-- to Somerset Collection South during mall hours Friday through April 19.

The first 100 girls to turn in their dresses will receive a \$10 mall gift card.

And every girl who donates a dress will be entered into a contest to win front row seats to a Jonas Brothers concert July 26 at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

For more info: 248-643-6360.
