

Cleaners helps volunteers be belles of the ball



By [Rachel Weaver](#)

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Published: Friday, June 7, 2013, 8:57 p.m.

Updated: Friday, June 7, 2013

Each year, a select group of young ladies are honored for their commitment to giving back to their communities. Now, a special boutique exists to give a little something back to them.

Owl Cleaners, a chain of eight businesses in the Pittsburgh region, has opened a boutique for the white ball gowns and formal dresses worn by recipients of the St. Lucy's Auxiliary for the Blind's Joan of Arc Medal at the auxiliary's annual Medallion Ball. The space is located at Owl Cleaners' Pine Township location.

“These girls work so hard doing hundreds of hours of community service. We want to help them feel happy and proud,” says Heather Zicarelli, Owl Cleaners co-owner and member of St. Lucy's.

The company spent more than \$3,000 constructing the boutique, which houses a dressing room, mirrored pedestal alcove and alterations area. Construction wrapped up June 1.

St. Lucy is the patron saint to the blind, so the auxiliary named in her honor raises funds for the Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh, located in Homestead.

The organization's primary mission is to encourage and inspire a lifetime commitment of volunteer service in young women, says Patty Orringer, the group's 2012 president who helped develop the boutique idea. Each year, it honors up to 120 girls who have volunteered in a variety of venues, including hospitals, nursing homes and camps.

"We hope they continue with it in college and later in life," Orringer says.

Girls enroll in the program in eighth grade and must complete 150 or more hours of community service prior to their high school graduation. Those who receive medallions do so in formal white gowns at an annual ball held the day after Thanksgiving. The bishop of Pittsburgh Diocese presents the honor. This year marks the 50th ball.

"Moms have asked us if we had any old dresses they could buy inexpensively," Orringer says. "We would have loved to do it, but we had nowhere to store them."

Zicarelli, a five-year member of St. Lucy's, was able to provide the solution. Though the ball is in November, the girls start searching for the perfect gown months ahead of time, she says. Girls who buy new dresses for the event at retail stores then donate their dresses to the Medallion Boutique for future recipients to wear.

Medallion Boutique offers dresses for minimal cost — generally from \$50 to \$250 — and all proceeds are donated back to St. Lucy's. The boutique also helps foster Owl Cleaners' commitment to green business practices, says Zicarelli.

"We're really trying to be more environmentally friendly, so this has been great," she says. "It's been so rewarding. The gals who come in and their moms have been so lovely, grateful and positive. It makes it so worthwhile."

The Medallion Boutique is located at 155 Towne Centre Drive, Pine, and is open by appointment. Call 412-576-9257. Donations are tax-deductible. For information on becoming a member of St. Lucy's Auxiliary, visit www.stlucysauxiliary.org.

Rachel Weaver is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. She can be reached at 412-320-7948 or rweaver@tribweb.com.

Read more: <http://triblive.com/lifestyles/morelifestyles/4117146-74/ball-boutique-lucy#ixzz2Vp0cKuN9>