

life

■ **CHARITY**: Annual prom dress drive runs March 2-21

'Ballroom Blitz' boosts local girls

BARRIE — While the story of Cinderella is a fairytale to most, several women from our area are making it a reality for local under-privileged girls who are graduating Grade 12 this year.

These women are volunteers for an organization called The Ballroom Blitz, a non-profit organization that donates free prom dresses and accessories to high school girls from across Simcoe County who could not otherwise afford them.

Started by local business-women Robin Hadfield in 2006, the Blitz, with the help of corporate and individual donors, has played "fairy godmother" to more than 300 girls.

With many families struggling to make ends meet as a result of the high cost of living, luxuries like prom dresses are often unattainable.

The prom is considered one of the traditional rites of passage, with thousands of students across the country participating. But the costs are often very high — a formal dress easily tops \$200 and tickets for the event at some schools cost more than \$100 per couple.

During last year's Blitz, boutique 'dress giveaway' days, 200 girls were outfitted and accessorized.

The girls came from 24 high schools throughout the region. The girls are able to choose from hundreds of gowns of all different colours, sizes, fabrics and designers.

"We are looking forward to our annual dress drive starting March 2 until March 21, and expect to get donations of some beautiful dresses," Shannon Murree, volunteer co-ordinator, said in a release.

"Our local community support



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The Ballroom Blitz, which provides needy students with prom dresses, is back for another year. The non-profit group's dress drive runs March 2-21. For information, visit www.ballroom-blitz.org. Last year, 200 local girls were provided with dresses.

has been tremendous. Dress or financial donations can be dropped off at any Re/Max Chay Realty offices in Barrie, Angus, Alliston, Innisfil or Tottenham, the administration offices of the Kozlov Centre, plus we are pleased that Kaelynn's Bridal in Thornton is accepting donations of gowns for us again this year."

The Ballroom Blitz is now accepting dress donations.

For information on how to participate, visit www.ballroom-blitz.org.