

Cancer-battling teens get red carpet prom

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FORT LAUDERDALE – It's the event of the year for area teens battling cancer. Coming from Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, approximately 200 are expected to arrive by limousine at the Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale for this year's A Prom To Remember, being held May 10.

A Prom To Remember, a local nonprofit, will welcome 200 patients from the tri-county region who are currently getting or have received treatment at Chris Evert Children's Hospital, Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, Miami Children's Hospital, Baptist Children's Hospital, Palms West Hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center and Holtz Children's Hospital.

Female

guests will be escorted up the red carpet by Miami Dolphins Mike Pouncey, Olivier Vernon, Lamar Miller, Brent Grimes, Dan Carpenter, Jason Trusnik, Brandon Fields, Nate Garner and John Denney. The boys will be joined by Miss South Florida, Miss Florida USA, Miss Florida Teen USA, Miss Coral Gables, Miss Coral Gables Teen and Miss Miami Lakes Teen.

Lining the red carpet will be members of the media, as well as the Florida Panthers Ice Dancers, Stanley C. Panther, Dolphins Cheerleaders, Dolphins mascot T.D., the Miami Marlins Energy Team, volunteers and VIP guests.

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Prom To Remember provides like-minded teens with a special night to forget about their illness and just be a regular kid. Most youths battling cancer are unable to attend prom due to being ill or related reasons.

On a recent Sunday April 21, Macy's at Westfield Broward

Mall opened its doors an hour early for a private dress shopping event for A Prom To Remember. Accompanied by parents, siblings and friends, 26 girls, many of whom are currently undergoing treatment at local hospitals, came from the tri-county area to find the perfect dress to wear, made free to the lucky girls.

“I feel like a celebrity,” Sydney Lister, 16 and a cancer survivor, said of the store being only open to prom guests. She admitted she had scoped out dresses early so she’d know exactly where to run first.

Dennard Washington, a spokesperson for Macy’s, said that among Macy’s community support events, this one was extra special.

“Because this is local and we, all the store employees, can see the direct impact, it’s created a sense of involvement.

Next year, we hope this experience can be bigger and better,” Washington said. An hour later, as mothers were rushing to bring different sizes into dressing rooms and store associates were making calls to other stores for size checks, there was another surprise.

As their gowns were wrapped up, the girls were given make-up bags and gift bags filled with accessories and gift cards for shoes.

As she prepared to leave with gown and gifts in arm, Francheska Landrun, 16, said of the experience, “I thought I was in heaven.” “This was unforgettable,” said Cynthia Santiago, 17. “And now I’m looking forward to prom!”