



## Non-Profit of Excellence:

### *The Cinderella Project*

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The mission of The Cinderella Project is to support young women statewide with resources that may not exist for them otherwise. Their goal is to provide educational outreach and community-based projects that are designed to build confidence and self-esteem. Founded in 2008, The Cinderella Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization run by volunteers with chapters in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport.

The Cinderella Project's signature service program is to collect donated prom dresses and distribute them to high school students who are in financial need. We assist young women in attending their prom while at the same time instilling an appreciation for community service and the importance of giving back.

The prom's significance for young women is more than just about wearing a pretty dress for one night – it is an important rite of passage that builds self-esteem and a cherished, memorable event in their development as young adults. For most students, attending their prom is a milestone where they can reflect on their past accomplishments and contemplate their plans for the future. Helping young women attend their prom empowers them with increased self-confidence and enables them to strive towards achieving their future academic, personal and professional goals. The Cinderella Project's five chapters combined have distributed more than 6,000 free prom dresses to young women in parishes statewide.

In 2012, The Cinderella Project launched its second service program, the Leadership Academy as an intensive, college-prep workshop for underserved female high school students from schools across Louisiana. The Leadership Academy assists high school women in

making the transition from high school to college by demystifying the college application process, connecting them with financial aid resources and discussing the expectations of and demands on college students.

The three-day Academy on the Louisiana State University's campus immerses young women in a college setting, exposes them to educational opportunities available after high school and inspires them to pursue their future academic goals. Once accepted into the program, Leadership Academy attendees:

- Learn about applying to college and securing financial aid and scholarships
- Learn about the ACT test and preparation options as well as take a mini-test
- Meet with a college counselor and learn about the importance of budgeting while in school and avoiding credit card debt
- Audit an introductory level college course and participate in an interactive workshop to learn about the application of science and chemistry in everyday life
- Meet with female mentors including state legislators, graduates students and community leaders.

There is no cost for students to attend the Leadership Academy. Each graduate receives a stipend to take the ACT test and a \$500 college scholarship. Since 2012, 73 students have graduated from the Leadership Academy and have enrolled in colleges including Louisiana State University, Tulane, Xavier, Dillard, University of Louisiana-Lafayette and McNeese State University.