



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF GREATER NEW HAVEN**  
*Women building better communities*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut-March 15, 2016 The Junior League of Greater of New Haven, along with Project Hope Connecticut, are pleased to announce the grand opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Say Yes to the Prom Dress boutique! The boutique provides free prom dresses, shoes, purses and jewelry to any high school students in Connecticut. The grand opening will take place Saturday, April 16 at 286 York Street, New Haven CT.

"It is fulfilling to see the joy on the girls' faces as they celebrate one of their greatest accomplishments - graduating from high school and being able to attend their senior prom," says project organizer Khalilah Abdulrahim of Project Hope CT. "Area youth are faced with many hardships during high school. Our mission for this project is to encourage and inspire adolescent girls, while lightening the load associated with the cost of attending senior prom."

The boutique provides an indispensable service to area teens. A 2015 survey conducted by Visa reveals that the average American family spends about \$919 on prom. This figure is even higher for lower income households: families that earn less than \$25,000 per year spend an average of \$1,393 on prom. Around \$100 to \$500 of that cost is for the prom dress alone. The Say Yes to the Prom Dress boutique unburdens the average family of some the prohibitive costs of prom. By providing completely free dresses and accessories, the boutique allows more teens to enjoy this rite of passage. Last year over 500 teenagers were outfitted for prom.

"We don't just send girls home with a prom dress and some accessories," adds Junior League of Greater New Haven President Noelle Shipley. "At the shop, girls can feel pampered and experience the magical high-end boutique experience with their families and friends, choosing from the thousands of dresses in the inventory, before going off to the prom feeling beautiful and confident."

If anyone is interested in contributing, Jordan's Furniture is accepting donations of dresses and accessories until March 28 at their 40 Sargent Drive, New Haven location. They are especially looking for plus size dress donations. Dress donations can also be dropped off to our sponsor dry cleaners, Executive Cleaners, until March 28 at their Milford location, 351 Boston Post Rd, Milford, CT. The boutique will be open Thursdays from 12-6 PM, Fridays from 12-6 PM and Saturdays from 9-6 PM from April 16 – April 30.

Founded in 1923, the Junior League of Greater New Haven has sought to effect positive change in the Greater New Haven community by promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and supporting the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. To learn more go to [www.jlgnh.org](http://www.jlgnh.org)

Founded in 2011, Project Hope CT provides youth with the skills needed to make quality life-long decisions and lasting contributions to their community. This is done through community events and mentoring, which support and promote positive academic outcomes for high school students. To learn more go to [projecthopect.org](http://projecthopect.org).