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They're busy saving up for college, not prom. 'Say Yes to the Dress' has them covered



TLC's "Say Yes to the Prom" Comes to Miami 1:01



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The star of the TLC reality show "Say Yes to the Dress" took a break from counseling brides to help some South Florida teens pick outfits for another important occasion — the prom.

Monte Durham, one of the popular show's bridal fashion directors, spent Tuesday advising 200 Miami-Dade and Broward students as they searched for the perfect dress or tuxedo from hundreds on display at the Coral Gables Country Club. The students had been chosen by guidance counselors at Booker T. Washington, Homestead, Hialeah and Nova high schools based on their grades and economic need — and each got to take home the outfit of their choice for free.

Celebrate 'Say Yes to the Prom' 2016





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"I'm so grateful because I was worried that I wasn't going to have a perfect prom dress ... because right now all of my money is going to college," said Gabriela Fowler, 17, a student at Hialeah High who is saving up to attend the University of West Florida.

Fowler said she tried on 15 dresses before picking out a blue "princess kind of dress" with beading and embroidery.

"I feel like this is the best thing that ever happened to me. It's the best thing that could ever happen to anybody," she said, adding that many of her classmates are also struggling to save for college.

THE TLC STAR POSED FOR PHOTOS WITH STUDENTS AND DISPENSED FASHION ADVICE: FOR GIRLS, NOTHING SO TIGHT THAT DANCING WILL BE A STRUGGLE. AND FOR BOYS, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO LOOK LIKE A GENTLEMAN.

Durham, who stars in the Atlanta-based version of the television show, said he enjoys hearing students' stories as they pick their outfits. "We're just here supporting that, encouraging that and hoping we're building more confidence so they can truly go out and become the stars they are," he said.

The TLC star posed for photos with students and dispensed fashion advice: for girls, nothing so tight that dancing will be a struggle. And for boys, the important thing is to look like a gentleman.

“We have had an incredible amount of enthusiasm out of these students,” Durham said. “The willingness to listen and be educated about fashion trends is really unbelievable.”

But the event isn't just about looking good. Students also got advice on succeeding in school from Miami-Dade Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, and heard about college scholarships and other opportunities from Miami Dade College and national foundations.



Alberto M. Carvalho
@MiamiSup

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Helping students pick out and get fitted for their free tuxedos during #SYTTP. This is the first year young males get prom outfits too.

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This is the third year the event, called “Say Yes to the Prom,” has stopped in Miami on its national tour. Durham and his crew started in Los Angeles and will be traveling to New York, Chicago and Silver Spring, Maryland, where TLC’s parent company is headquartered. On April 1, TLC is airing a 90-minute prom special featuring Los Angeles students. (Last year’s prom episode took place in Miami.)

Helping high school students get dressed up for prom isn't that different from advising his usual clientele, Durham said.

“Some of our brides do act like teens, so there you go,” he said. “It’s an emotional time. You’re picking a very important dress for a very important date.”

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