

## Group collecting prom dresses for needy teens

By KARA L. RICHARDSON • STAFF WRITER •  
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**BRIDGEWATER** — The Somerset County United Way Young Professionals hope to collect 400 prom dresses to give a special evening to teen girls who might not otherwise be able to afford to participate in the high school rite-of-passage.

The group's collection has been extended to April 26 as the members are opening the prom dress drive to all Somerset County high schools, said Yeni Pena, who has coordinated the drive for the past two years

In addition to new and gently used prom dresses, community members are encouraged to donate accessories such as costume jewelry and purses, shoes and new cosmetics.

The collection depots are Express Employment Professionals in Somerville, the Presbyterian Church at Pluckemin in Bedminster, Bridgewater Marriott Hotel in Bridgewater, Due Terre in Bernardsville, and Temple Beth El in Hillsborough.

Last year, the group received 120 dresses and offered them to Bound Brook High School students in need, Pena said.

The group contacts guidance counselors at the area high schools to find girls to invite to the event.

"I grew up in a single-family and prom can be very expensive," Pena said. "It is a big ordeal - from doing your hair and doing your nails, but it is a

celebration of success. We wanted to decrease the financial burden for struggling families so their daughters can be part of this celebration "

She said the group is looking for a store willing to give young men discounts on tuxedo rentals so that one day they may offer a similar event for young men

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

**WHO:** Somerset County United Way Young Professionals

**WHAT:** Prom dress and accessories collection for Somerset County girls

**WHEN:** Ongoing through April 26

**DRESS DROP-OFF DEPOTS:** • The Presbyterian Church at Pluckemin, Route 202-206 North Pluckemin section of Bedminster; • Express Employment Professionals, 72 E. Main St., Somerville;  
• Bridgewater Marriott Hotel 700 Commons Way, Bridgewater;  
• Due Terre Restaurant, 107 Martinsville Road, Bernardsville; • Temple Beth El 67 Route 206, Hillsborough  
**MORE INFO:** Liliana Barreiro, 908-253-6528 or yp@scuw.org