

AN EVENING OF
THE HUNDRED DRESSES

AN ENRICHMENT NIGHT DESIGNED TO GIVE EACH SISTER
THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ANOTHER SISTER IN
NEED.

We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road;
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the
load.

---Richard Gillard

"Sisters, we all need to believe in ourselves as God's "agents" much, much more than we do, activating the gifts and the powers He has given us as if He Himself were here. On the outside we may seem to be "little people" little everyday souls with everyday problems, but we are the everyday instruments God has always used to do His work and perform His miracles from the beginning."

---Elder Holland, BYU Women's Conference 2007

"THE LORD SAID, SPEAKING OF HIS SERVANTS, "THEIR ARM SHALL BE MY ARM." (DC 35:14) HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THIS? TO ME THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST SACRED AND SIGNIFICANT AND PERSONAL COMMISSIONS I CAN READ ABOUT IN THE HOLY RECORDS OR ELSEWHERE." ---ELDER MARION D. HANKS

THE HUNDRED DRESSES IS AN EVENING DESIGNED FOR RELIEF SOCIETY AND YOUNG WOMEN TO PROVIDE DRESSES FOR WOMEN IN NEED. THE EVENT'S THEME COMES FROM THE CLASSIC CHILDREN'S BOOK, "THE HUNDRED DRESSES" BY ELEANOR ESTES.

THE GOAL IS TO DONATE 100 DRESSES TO A LOCAL ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES WOMEN; A WOMEN'S SHELTER, A PROGRAM THAT HELPS WOMEN FIND WORK BY PREPARING THEM FOR JOB INTERVIEWS OR A REFUGEE PROGRAM THAT ASSISTS WOMEN ACCLIMATE TO THEIR NEW SURROUNDINGS. YOU CAN RESEARCH THESE PROGRAMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR THROUGH CHURCH MEMBERS SERVING INNER CITY MISSIONS.

MONTHS IN ADVANCE INTRODUCE THE EVENT TO YOUR SISTERS AND INVITE THEM TO CONSIDER DONATING A DRESS. EMPHASIZE THAT YOU ARE NOT ASKING FOR THEM TO CLEAN OUT THEIR STORAGE CLOSETS! YOU ARE ASKING FOR **ONE** NEW OR GENTLY-USED DRESS; CLEAN, PRESSED, MENDED, AND READY TO WEAR. OFTEN WOMEN HAVE DRESSES THAT THEY DO NOT WEAR ANYMORE BUT THEY ARE HESITANT TO THROW THEM INTO A BAG THAT WILL THEN BE THROWN INTO A BIN.....THIS PROJECT IS ABOUT A LOVELY OUTFIT, A SUIT, OR A SKIRT AND BLOUSE THAT WAS THOUGHTFULLY PUT TOGETHER AND BROUGHT ON A HANGER TO FULFILL A SPECIFIC NEED. EMPHASIZE THAT **ALL** SIZES ARE NEEDED.

GET THE WORD OUT! IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE THE YOUNG WOMEN, CO-ORDINATE WITH THE YOUNG WOMEN PRESIDENCY ABOUT THE DATE OF THE EVENT AND THE DATE OF THE 'FIRST SUNDAY' KICK-OFF MEETING.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE THE COVER ART FROM THE BOOK FOR POSTERS OR INVITATIONS, WRITE TO THE PUBLISHER TO GET WRITTEN PERMISSION. THE INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE FRONT OF THE BOOK:

REQUESTS FOR PERMISSION TO MAKE COPIES OF ANY PART OF THE WORK SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

PERMISSIONS DEPARTMENT
HARCOURT BRACE & CO., 6277 SEA HARBOR DRIVE
ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32887-6777

COMPLETE THIS WELL IN ADVANCE THEN PROCEED TO DESIGN YOUR POSTERS, SIGNS FOR THE CHURCH DOORS AND INVITATIONS. ADVERTISE THE DATE IMMEDIATELY IN YOUR WARD BULLETIN OR ON YOUR RELIEF SOCIETY CALENDAR. THE OFFICIAL INVITATION IS GIVEN TO THE WOMEN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE "FIRST SUNDAY' KICK-OFF MEETING.

THE INVITATIONS ARE MADE IN THE SHAPE OF A TAG AND ARE TIED TO HANGERS WITH RAFFIA. (CHECK THE DOLLAR STORES FOR

INEXPENSIVE HANGERS THAT MATCH OR CO-ORDINATE WITH THE THEME) THE SISTERS WILL BRING THEIR DRESSES ON THIS HANGER TO THE EVENT.

MEET TOGETHER ON A FIRST SUNDAY DURING RELIEF SOCIETY TO SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PROJECT AND TO EXPLAIN WHERE THE DRESSES WILL BE GOING. GET PERMISSION TO INVITE A SPEAKER TO SHARE SLIDES OF THE WOMEN WHO WILL RECEIVE THE DRESSES OR TO SHARE BACKGROUND STORIES OR HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS AND WHAT THEY DO. THIS IS A CHANCE FOR THE SISTERS TO FEEL CONNECTED TO THESE WOMEN WHO NEED ASSISTANCE AND TO FEEL INSPIRED TO PARTICIPATE. SHARE THE STORY OF "THE HUNDRED DRESSES" AT THIS MEETING. TAKE FIVE TO SEVEN MINUTES TO BRIEFLY GIVE A SYNOPSIS OF THE STORYLINE.

THE BOOK IS THE SWEET STORY OF WANDA PETRONSKI, A LITTLE GIRL WHO IS SO POOR THAT SHE WEARS THE SAME DRESS TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY BUT SHE TELLS EVERYONE THAT SHE HAS 100 DRESSES AT HOME IN HER CLOSET.

"ELEANOR ESTES WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE THIS STORY BECAUSE OF AN EXPERIENCE SHE HAD AS A YOUNG GIRL. SHE HAD A GIRL IN HER OWN CLASS WHO ALWAYS WORE THE SAME DRESS AND WAS TEASED AND THEN MOVED AWAY. ELEANOR NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO APOLOGIZE. WHAT COULD SHE DO SO MANY YEARS LATER TO SET THINGS RIGHT, TO REACH OUT TO THE GIRL WHO HAD STOOD LONELY AND SILENT AGAINST THE RED BRICK WALL OF THE SCHOOL? WELL, SHE THOUGHT, THE ONE THING SHE COULD DO WAS TO WRITE HER STORY."

EXTRACT SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK ABOUT THE STRUGGLE OF ONE OF THE CHARACTERS WHO DOESN'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT TEASING THIS GIRL WHO IS "DIFFERENT" FROM THE REST OF THEM. READ ABOUT HOW THE CHILDREN IN THE CLASS FEEL WHEN THE TEACHER DISPLAYS WANDA'S BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK ON THE WALLS OF THE CLASSROOM; ONE HUNDRED DRESSES!

YOU COULD INCLUDE THIS EXCERPT FROM A *READERS DIGEST* ARTICLE ABOUT A SCHOOL TEACHER WHO DESCRIBES HER EXPERIENCES FROM HER VERY FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING. SHE TALKS ABOUT THE REACTION OF HER STUDENTS AFTER SHE FINISHED READING ALOUD "THE HUNDRED DRESSES" TO THEM:

"FOR A MOMENT EVERYTHING IS QUIET. THEN A BOY CALLED ASHWORTH---

WHISPERS IN MY EAR: "I HAVE TO TELL THE CLASS SOMETHING."
HE DISCREETLY SHOWS ME HE'S MISSING HALF A FINGER.
I FACE HIM TOWARD THE CLASS AND PUT MY HANDS ON HIS SHOULDERS.
HE IS TREMBLING. "ASHWORTH HAS SOMETHING PERSONAL TO SHARE. I HOPE
YOU
WILL KEEP IN MIND *THE HUNDRED DRESSES* WHEN HE TELLS YOU."
"I...I ONLY HAVE NINE AND A HALF FINGERS." HE HOLDS UP HIS HANDS.
"PLEASE DON'T TEASE ME ABOUT IT."
WHO THE CLASS HUMS, IMPRESSED, THEN ONE BOY CALLS OUT, "ANYBODY
MAKES FUN OF YOU WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME!"
"ME TOO," SAYS ANOTHER.
THEIR SEEING THE CLASS BECOME UNITED IN THE SPIRIT OF DEFENDING ONE OF
THEIR OWN, ASHWORTH SIGHS AND SMILES AT ME.
THE POWER OF LITERATURE!"
READERS DIGEST, "DIARY OF A ROOKIE TEACHER" BY ESME RAJI CODELL, MAY 2000

NOTE: NEWER EDITIONS OF THE BOOK HAVE AN INTERESTING
THREE-PAGE *LETTER TO READERS* WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR'S
DAUGHTER, HELENA ESTES, REGARDING THE IMPACT OF THE
STORY ON YOUNG READERS TODAY.

PLAN A LIGHT DINNER FOR THE EVENING. THIS MIGHT
INCLUDE A DESSERT OF A COOKIE CUT IN THE SHAPE OF A DRESS
AND DECORATED INDIVIDUALLY.

DISPLAY THE DRESSES THAT YOU RECEIVE. ON THE NIGHT
OF THE EVENT, EACH SISTER WILL BRING HER DRESS ON THE
HANGER PROVIDED WITH HER INVITATION. YOU MIGHT HAVE
DRESS RACKS PLACED AROUND THE ROOM TO HANG THEM ON. IT
IS INSPIRING FOR ALL OF THE WOMEN TO SEE WHAT THEY HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED, IT IS VISUALLY STRIKING TO SEE THEM DISPLAYED
AND THEY BECOME PART OF YOUR DECORATIONS. A WIRE MIGHT
BE HUNG AROUND THE EDGE OF THE ROOM AND THE DRESSES
DISPLAYED. (FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF THE TEACHER AS SHE
PUT UP WANDA'S DRAWINGS IN THE STORY)
PREPARE TO RECEIVE MORE THAN 100 DRESSES, HAVE PLENTY OF
SPACE.

--HAVING THE NUMBER, AS A GOAL REALLY GETS EVERYONE
COMMITTED.

PROVIDE SMALL TAGS TO TIE TO EACH OUTFIT. AS THE
SISTERS ARRIVE HAVE A TABLE WITH THE TAGS AND SOME RIBBON
OR RAFFIA. ON THE TAG IS PRINTED:

Given with love by

Emily

of the Holladay 8th Ward Relief Society.

(THE SISTER WILL SIGN HER FIRST NAME IN THE SPACE PROVIDED AND TIE THE TAG TO THE HANGER OF HER DRESS.)

For the ambitious:

THE EVENING OF THE HUNDRED DRESSES WILL STAND ON ITS OWN BY INVITING THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ORGANIZATION TO SPEAK TO THE WOMEN AFTER DINNER INSTEAD OF AT THE 'FIRST SUNDAY' KICK-OFF MEETING.

HOWEVER, IF YOU LIKE A CHALLENGE YOU CAN INVITE THE SPEAKER TO THE FIRST SUNDAY MEETING AND ON THE NIGHT OF THE EVENT, FOLLOWING DINNER, HAVE A FASHION SHOW OF DRESSES THROUGH THE DECADES.

WHAT MAKES THIS FASHION SHOW EXCITING IS THAT YOU ASK THE SISTERS OF YOUR RELIEF SOCIETY FOR THEIR FANTASTIC DRESSES FROM LONG AGO THAT ARE HIDING IN THEIR CLOSETS.

10 Fashion Show Suggestions:

1. CALL A SPECIALIST TO ORGANIZE THE FASHION SHOW, IT IS A LOT OF WORK!
2. ASK THE WOMEN TO CONSIDER HAVING SOMEONE MODEL THEIR OLD PROM DRESSES, BRIDESMAID DRESSES OR WEDDING GOWNS.
3. FOLLOW THE STYLES OF THE PAST 100 YEARS.
4. HAVE MUSIC TO ACCOMPANY EACH DECADE.
5. ASK WOMEN AND YOUNG WOMEN TO BE THE MODELS.
6. BRING IN SOMEONE WITH EXPERIENCE TO COACH THEM ON THEIR MODELING SKILLS.

7. ASSIGN SOMEONE TO BE IN THE DRESSING ROOM ASSISTING THE MODELS WITH THEIR QUICK CHANGES AND THEIR ACCESSORIES & SOMEONE TO GATHER THEM IN ORDER OFF-STAGE AND SOMEONE ON STAGE TO SEND THEM OUT.
8. HAVE A SISTER WRITE THE SCRIPT TO DESCRIBE THE MODELS AND TO SHARE INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT THE TIME PERIOD, WHERE WOMEN USED TO SHOP AND WHERE THE OUTFIT WAS WORN.
9. IF YOU DECIDE TO HAVE A RAMP FOR YOUR SHOW DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN FIT TABLES IN THE ROOM AS WELL. IF YOU CAN'T, THEN SET UP CHAIRS AND SERVE LIGHT FINGER FOODS FOR THE MEAL.
10. ASK SOMEONE TO TAKE INDIVIDUAL PICTURES OF THE MODELS BEFORE THE SHOW STARTS. PRESENT FRAMED PHOTOS OF THEM AS A THANK-YOU GIFT FOR PARTICIPATING.