

# Providing Outfits and Confidence to Women in Need

Dress for Success Southern Nevada helps hundreds of local women succeed by Amy Maier



A little confidence and a great outfit can go a long way. Dress for Success Southern Nevada was founded in 2009 to provide both, along with a network of support, to local women looking to get back on their feet and find their own path to economic self-sufficiency.

Dress for Success Southern Nevada is the local affiliate of the international non-profit that promotes the economic independence of disadvantaged women. The organization assists job-ready women, who are 16 years of age and older, by referral only from a range of non-profit, government and community organizations. It provides professional attire, support and career development tools to help these women thrive in work and life.

At the organization's boutique, each client works with a volunteer Image Consultant to find the right interview outfit, including jewelry, cosmetics, shoes and a purse. Through the process, they also gain a sense of confidence that they can "ace" their job interview like Debbie Bradbury did.

Bradbury had worked for a decade in the retail world, donning jeans and a

logoed shirt as part of her uniform, but when she was laid off and faced extended unemployment, she needed professional attire to return to the workforce. She came to Dress for Success Southern Nevada from JobConnect and left feeling stylish and empowered.

"It was just a beautiful experience," Bradbury recalls of her suiting.

As part of its suiting program, Dress for Success gives clients who find employment a full week's worth of clothing for their new career. Since opening the boutique in 2010, Dress for Success has suited nearly 600 women.

Dress for Success Southern Nevada also provides additional support services through its Professional Women's Group (PWG) and the Going Place Network (GPN) by Walmart. PWG provides newly hired clients a network of support, practical information, and inspiration to remain employed. GPN offers a 12-week safety net of support to women who have participated in the suiting program but have not yet secured employment.

"Dress for Success helped me talk about my experience and release the

anger I have been building since an incident that sent me to jail and cost me my job. I starting believing in myself again and realized I was worth something" says Sahna Aubert, a Dress for Success participant.

That is the goal of Dress for Success Southern Nevada, says Paula Lawrence, executive director of Dress for Success Southern Nevada.

"We believe that every woman can succeed, but some are at a disadvantage and need a little help and often a lot of encouragement," Lawrence stated. "Whether it's a suit, a mock interview, or a friend to talk to, that's what we are here to do – to help these women achieve their own success."

Dress for Success Southern Nevada is an organization that relies on support from its volunteers, clothing donations and financial contributions. The organization also holds events throughout the year to raise money for its programs. To learn more about Dress for Success Southern Nevada please visit: <http://www.dressforsuccesssouthernnevada.org> **MV**