



Erika Mims & Alicia Provence

## Welcome to The Bloom Closet

Typically, the children who shop in The Bloom Closet have nothing more than the clothes on their backs. They are scared, traumatized, and feel displaced. To them, The Bloom Closet experience is more than just picking out clothing; it's a reminder that they are loved and valued as members of our community.

Any child in state custody can "shop" at the Bloom Closet for clothing and necessities. "We provide foster children with free clothing and items to call their own. The entire experience boosts their self-esteem after having been through so much," comments Alisha Provence, The Bloom Closet Store Manager. "We also provide personal care items for good hygiene. I've seen children who haven't had a bath in weeks because they didn't have soap or water at home."

The Bloom Closet operates mainly on volunteer support from individuals, families, and community groups. "Donating and volunteering teaches people how to help others, and creates an understanding and love for their peers, regardless of circumstances," comments Erika Mims, Donations Manager for The Bloom Closet. "The recruitment of new volunteers and donors is essential. Volunteers who share our story and gather more support from their friends allows us to reach even more children and create a larger impact."

In 2016, The Bloom Closet served more than 2,000 foster children from 60 Georgia counties and gave away \$608,000 worth of merchandise. By 2019, Bloom expects to serve 75% more foster children, totaling 3,500 children.

## More than a store

"Once I received twin babies in the middle of the night with only the clothes on their backs. The Bloom Closet allowed me to come in due to emergency need. I was incredibly grateful."

- a Bloom Closet Foster Parent

## Ways to Give Back

### DONATE ITEMS

The Bloom Closet relies on the donations of individuals and groups to help meet the needs of displaced children and youth.

We are always in need of these items:

- New or gently used clothing and shoes (size infant through teen)
- Pajamas, socks and underwear (new; sizes infant through adult)
- Diaper wipes and diapers
- Baby powder, lotion, diaper rash ointment, and infant shampoo
- Baby gear (diaper bags, infant carriers, baby swings, cribs, etc.)
- Baby blankets, baby linens
- Baby bottles, sippy cups, bibs, pacifiers (new)
- Toiletries such as toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, and soap
- Books for babies, children and teens
- Toys and school supplies
- Gift cards to Amazon and Wal-Mart

### VOLUNTEER

Volunteers sort and organize clothing donations, or spend time one-on-one with the children as they shop in the store.

### HOST A DRIVE

You can support The Bloom Closet by organizing a clothing or toy drive at your church, school, or workplace.

*Bloom's cost-free clothing boutique provides a valuable avenue of support for foster children. In 2016, The Bloom Closet served more than 2,000 foster children from 60 Georgia counties.*