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Ashton Fisher and Michael Chapman on the way to Prom

photo provided by Wendy Chapman

Creating the Picture-Perfect Prom

By Amanda VanCura

IT'S PROM NIGHT 2006. Your son or daughter walks down the stairs dressed as if they were going to walk the red carpet at the Oscars. It's a picture-perfect moment. One that brings back memories of your own prom as if it were yesterday.

Every detail from shoes to jewelry, nails to hair and what they are wearing has been carefully planned. A limousine is parked just outside waiting to whisk them and their date away for one of the most memorable evenings of their senior year. You have been helping them prepare for this night all spring, making dinner reservations, getting transportation, helping prepare for the after-prom party. Now, you must kiss them goodbye and let them have their night of celebration. For them, this is a momentous event.

As a parent, prom can be momentous as well, but along with all the preparation and excitement often comes stress and anxiety. Every parent wants to help their son or daughter get ready for an incredible prom night. Just as every parent wants their child to be safe and make the right choices when it comes to the actual

event...and into the night.

With prom night just around the corner, there's still plenty of time for parents to help their kids make preparations, and even more time for parents to talk to them about where to go and what to do after the dance is over.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Although this is a date that most every senior has on their calendar the minute winter break is over, parents also need to know how much time they have to prepare. It's time to start the countdown...

WHERE TO BEGIN

Whether you have a son or a daughter, everyone has his or her fair share of getting ready for the big event. Of course, before most students even think about what to wear or where to go to dinner, they are worried about one thing – a date. Encourage your daughter to ask the guy of her dreams, or give your son tips on how to ask the one girl he's been waiting for. In the end, if they don't have dates, encourage them to go with a group of friends. That's

always a safe bet for a memorable prom night.

Once the "group" or date is determined, it's a good idea to start looking into dinner reservations. Popular places fill up quickly, and the more teenagers in the group, the harder it might be to get reservations.

THE PERFECT DRESS

For girls, what they look like can make or break how they feel about themselves on prom night. According to Ashley Lenz of

Centennial High School Prom
Saturday, May 6th
Southfork Ranch, 9 p.m. – 12 a.m.

Frisco High School Prom
Saturday, April 29th
Southfork Ranch, 9 p.m. – 12 a.m.

Legacy Christian Academy Prom
Saturday, April 29th

Little Elm High School Prom
Saturday, May 13th, 8 p.m.



Prom-Perfect "Up-do"
photo by John Glass

Lenz Boutique, prom is such an important night for teenage girls and they want to feel special.

"It's important for girls to be able to express their own unique sense of style in whatever gown they choose," says Ms. Lenz. She also advises girls to "be confident and know that no matter what dress you may choose, you are going to look fabulous!"

So how much will it cost to ensure your daughter gets that fabulous feeling?

Although there are dresses that can break your pocketbook, Ms. Lenz says that finding the perfect gown does not mean buying the most expensive gown in the store.

"Our wardrobe consultants take the time to ask each girl about the styles, colors, and price range they are most interested in. This allows us to assist our customers in finding the dress of their dreams," she reassures. "Dresses today tend to cost a lot more than they did ten, five, even two years ago. We have dresses starting around \$200. Each girl's price range will vary and there are many beautiful dresses on the market today that are quite affordable."

Lenz Boutique also offers appointments, allowing girls to receive one-on-one attention.

TUXEDO CHARM

Believe it or not, guys have quite a few

fashion options when it comes to picking out the perfect tux. In fact, Al's Formal Wear has over 70 styles of tuxedos available – one for every budget. One thing guys need to remember is to coordinate their attire. According to Al's Formal Wear, one should always match the accessories – the vest, cummerbund, tie, etc. – to his date's dress.

It's important for girls to be able to express their own unique sense of style in whatever gown they choose.

If your son hasn't already done so, take him to get measured. It's a good idea to go in at least three weeks before prom so the style he selects will be available. Also make sure to pick up the tuxedo the day before to ensure everything fits. However, they can always get you in a tuxedo as late as the day before prom.

COMPLETING THE LOOK

When it comes to hair, it's a good idea to let a hairdresser create the style for the big night out. However, if your daughter feels more comfortable doing things at

home, get advice from your stylist on how to achieve the perfect prom "do" with help from mom or friends.

Guys and girls also need a clean manicure before attending their prom. Girls may enjoy a "spa party" before the event, such as the kind offered at Nails by Stephanie.

"Imagine your very own team of professionals arriving, in the privacy of your own home, ready to spoil you," says Stephanie. "Girls can indulge in all the luxuries we all crave: manicures, pedicures and body massage."

DON'T FORGET FLOWERS

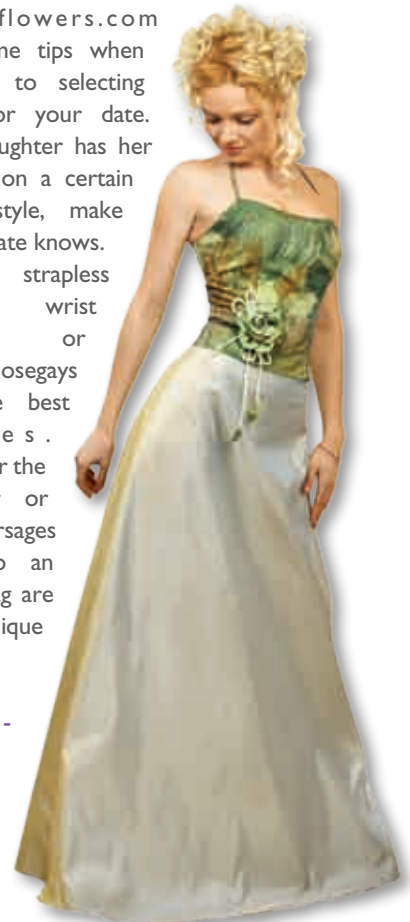
Sometimes the littlest details can be forgotten until the last minute. Keep in mind that prom season is also peak wedding season and, for Centennial High School, falls the weekend before Mother's Day. As a result, popular flowers are often in high demand. Try ordering at least two weeks in advance so your florist has time to order the necessary quantities and ensure you get what you really want.

Aboutflowers.com offers some tips when it comes to selecting flowers for your date. If your daughter has her heart set on a certain corsage style, make sure her date knows.

For strapless dresses, wrist corsages or handheld nosegays make the best choices.

Flowers for the girl's hair or even corsages pinned to an evening bag are other unique options.

TRANS-



PORTATION

Limousines tend to be a popular mode of travel for the evening. Not only does it ensure that the students will get where they need to go without getting lost, it is a safe form of transportation.

Most companies offer several different types of vehicles to choose from. For example, Collin-County-based Allen Limousine offers everything from late model Town Cars for \$65 per hour, to stretch limousines, 18-passenger Navigators, and even a Hummer H2 for \$250 per hour. No matter what vehicle is chosen, most companies have a 5-6 hour minimum.



ENSURING A SAFE NIGHT

One of the first things you can do to ensure your child's safety is to make sure they have a safe ride to and from where they are going. Provide them with some extra money in case they have to call a cab. If your child carries a mobile phone, make sure they have it with them. Your child should know they can always call you in case they end up in a situation that may compromise their safety or reputation.

Prom can be an amazing experience for teenagers, but it can also be a time of pressure. As a parent, you have most likely had talks with your child about underage drinking and drugs. Before they walk out that door, have that talk one last time. Help them to remember the consequences and dangers of drinking, drugs, and driving under the influence. After all, the last place they want to spend prom night is in an emergency room. Make sure your teenager has a plan to handle these pressuring situations.

AN AFTER-PROM ALTERNATIVE

Michael Walker, president of the Centennial High School Seniors Parents Club, says problems can arise when parents allow teens to have an after-prom

event in their home. "There is usually not enough supervision at these parties. Parents think they can control their own house, but you put enough kids in some of these homes and it would take an adult

in every room, in every area outside their house, to properly supervise. Even then, it may not be enough," he comments.

Mr. Walker also adds that parents should check up on their kids throughout the evening.

If your child has no plans after the prom, make sure to set a reasonable curfew and contact your teen from time to time to make sure they are OK.

As a safe alternative, many area high schools have school-sponsored after-prom events. Centennial High School (CHS) will be holding their after-prom party at Dave & Busters in Stonebriar Centre from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.

"This lock-in event will provide a fun, safe, non-alcoholic and supervised event for the seniors to attend to further enhance their prom experience," says Michelle Tornes, Chairperson for the CHS After-Prom Committee. "We will have the doors open for arrivals for a pre-determined amount of time to encourage students to arrive promptly. Once the door is locked, students will not be allowed to leave until the end of the event at 5 a.m."

Activities planned for the event include everything from karaoke and hip-hop dance performances to caricature/butt sketch artists, poker-style card tables and

unlimited arcade game play. The committee is also planning to serve unlimited soft drinks, snacks and finger foods for the duration of the event. Students will be having such an incredible time at the event

they won't even notice the senior parent volunteers who are chaperoning, along with "only the really cool" CHS teachers and administration, adds Ms. Tornes.

"Dave & Busters also has several cameras located in the facility for added security. They will also provide a security guard," comments Ms. Tornes.

The 2006 senior class at CHS is the first graduating class. Ms. Tornes encourages all seniors to participate in this historical event,

even if they are not going to the prom.

For more information about Centennial High School's after-prom event, contact the 2006 parents club (www.chsseniors.com). For details on Frisco High Schools prom events, contact friscohclass2006@yahoo.com.

AN INCREDIBLE MEMORY

Once the photos have been taken, the music has died down, and the lights have dimmed, your tired teen will walk through the door with stories to share. In the coming days you'll hear about the dances, the games, what everyone was wearing, how cool the limo was, and more teen gossip than you thought you could ever hear.

By playing a part in the preparation and educating your teen about the pressures that might arise, you have built a trust that will last for years.

There are still a few weeks left before prom, and plenty of time for you, as a parent, to help with those last-minute arrangements. After all, this is a magical time for your teen, and an unforgettable memory.

Amanda VanCura is a freelance writer living in Frisco.