

Contact: Monique Jones
Suited to Succeed
Phone: (410) 528-1799
Fax: (410) 528-1915

10 Light Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
info@SuitedToSucceed.org
www.SuitedtoSucceed.org

SUITED TO SUCCEED



SUITED RELEASE

Suited to Succeed: Fashion Conscious for the Community

Understanding the Career Fashion needs of the Women we serve

Baltimore, March 3, 2011: Suited to Succeed clientele who come in search of outfits are required to try on the clothing and receive the approval of staff members before they can leave with them. "The women have to try clothing on," said Ms. Theresa, volunteer clothing coordinator. **"We have veto power. We want it to fit them well and to look right for the office."** For example, she said, there are always a few shoppers who want their clothing a bit too tight or a shade too short. Suited staffers quickly, yet delicately recommend clothing in a larger size when necessary. They're also there to help with fashion advice — like finding coordinating colors and appropriate accessories.

Believe it or not most of the women who are seeking to enter the workforce know the value of, and the importance of, looking like they will be an asset to an office. In other words, while the 'Ugly Betty' look (unfashionable and unflattering clothing completely inappropriate to the office in which a person works) or perhaps the overly sexy look (the too-tight miniskirt, the sky-high heels and the low-cut blouse) might be cute or funny on TV, it won't get an applicant a job — and STS staffers won't allow the clients to leave with inappropriate business attire. **"We want them to look business appropriate," Ms. Theresa said. "We make sure they do."**

Suited to Succeed clothes approximately 200 women a month. **Last year, the program provided more than 10,400 items of clothing to its clients.** "The demand just keeps getting bigger and bigger," noted Keontay Beaman, Office Manager. During the first few years (97'-00') of the program's existence, it served approximately 2,000 women. In the past five years, however, its popularity has exploded. To help keep the program running smoothly, **Suited makes a deal with its clientele:** for each hour a person spends shopping for free clothing at Suited, that person puts in an hour of volunteer work (which is mainly spent sorting donated clothing and hanging them in the proper places around the store at 10 Light Street).

The program relies on donations of goods, as well as monetary donations to continue running, and also sponsors an annual fundraising event, **Beaman credits a strong board of directors with helping the organization continue in its mission.** She says the **volunteers and other staff members are also a source of strength and stability** as well. She adds, **much of the incentive to keep the program running comes from watching those who are served by it.** "It's really interesting. We see women come to us looking really downtrodden — they're wearing jeans, old tennis shoes or flip flops and maybe a T-shirt,' and they put on a suit and right away you can just see it boost their self-confidence." **"The majority of the women who get their jobs have told us they don't think they would have gotten that job without the suit."**

Note: Information on the program, including how to donate money and materials and who is eligible to receive clothing, is available by going to www.suitedtosucceed.org or by calling 410-528-1799.

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