



**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Catie's Closet Goes Virtual For  
10th Anniversary Gala

DRACUT, MA -- Catie's Closet made a mark in its history as it turned its in-person 10th anniversary gala into a virtual event, raising \$181,000 to support students living in poverty.

The organization typically holds its highly anticipated annual gala at Andover Country Club in March, where hundreds of attendees gather together to bid on auction items, enjoy a meal with fellow supporters, and hear directly from the organization's leaders and those impacted by the mission. Due to COVID-19 and guidelines regarding social distancing, Catie's Closet postponed the event and opted for a virtual format.

"Our annual gala is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and to celebrate our 10th anniversary this year was even more special" said Mickey Cockrell, CEO and Co-Founder of Catie's Closet. "Due to the increased need caused by COVID-19, it was crucial for us to ensure the success of our gala to provide for thousands of students and their families."

Catie's Closet kicked off the gala celebrations on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> by opening online bidding and raffle ticket purchases to all its supporters. On Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, virtual attendees watched the event from their homes via a livestream on Facebook and on the organization's website, [catiesclost.org](http://catiesclost.org).

Cockrell joined President and Co-Founder, Anne-Marie Sousa; Director of Operations and Co-Founder, Denise Trombly; and Board Member and Co-Founder, Laura Bisson, to host the one-hour event at the organization's distribution center in Dracut, Mass.

Attendees bid on auction items from home with their mobile devices and enjoyed video interviews with Catie's Closet sponsors, school partners and students. They even got a virtual tour of the distribution centers in Dracut and Boston, as well as an inside look at some of the closets within the schools.

"While we had to make unprecedented changes to our gala format, we took this opportunity to give our supporters an even more in-depth look into all of the work and the people that make Catie's Closet such an impactful organization," Cockrell said. "We are so thankful to everyone that tuned in and participated throughout the week."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Catie's Closet employees delivered over 450,000 toiletries to the emergency meal sites established by its public school partners. They also made special deliveries to those unable to leave their homes. The funds raised from the gala will allow the

organization to continue providing these kits throughout the summer, as well as meet the challenges ahead in the new school year.



"It's important because there's not a lot of families or kids that are able to get what Catie's Closet provides, and it's really nice of them to do that."  
-Ndayisenga, Student

Photo Cutline: Ndayisenga, a student of Catie's Closet, explains why she thinks the organization's work is so important. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Catie's Closet Virtual Gala, "Coming Out Stronger", raised \$181,000 to provide critical toiletry and clothing items to students who are living in poverty or undergoing a difficult living transition.

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Established in 2010, Catie's Closet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that improves school attendance and the self-esteem of students living in poverty by offering in-school closets filled with free clothing, toiletries and other necessities. Serving 50,000 students, Catie's Closet is offered in 85 schools across nine school districts in Massachusetts and New Hampshire with distribution centers in Dracut and Boston, Massachusetts. More information is available at [catiescloset.org](http://catiescloset.org).