



## The Internet brings two unlikely partners together for a good cause in eastern Kentucky

**Name:**  
The Fairy God Foundation

**Internet:**  
[www.fairygodfoundation.org](http://www.fairygodfoundation.org)

**Products/Services:**  
Provides free prom dresses, services and accessories to disadvantaged high school students.

**Location:**  
Hyden, Ky/Leslie County

**Leadership:**  
Stephen M. Wayne,  
Executive Director

**Employees:**  
6 volunteer staff members

**Founded:** 2005

**Reach:** Southeastern Kentucky

**Innovative Insight:** *"Pursue your ambitions. There are good people in this world, and if you follow your dreams, they will take notice and positive things will happen."*

**Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:** *"The Internet is vital for communication among our staff, especially with about half of us out of state and the other half dispersed in different counties."*

**Advice to Growing Companies:** *"Write press releases for any and all reasons. The worst that can happen is it won't be published; the best is lots of publicity."*

**Hyden, Kentucky** - Most people have fond memories of their high school proms, but for some teenagers prom night is just another dream among many that won't be fulfilled because of an inability to pay for a dress. A non-profit organization in eastern Kentucky is helping to change that for girls throughout the region who wish to go to the prom but who are unable to afford the expenses associated with the event.

The Fairy God Foundation, co-founded by Stephen M. Wayne and Marilyn Feltner-Collins, has been in operation since January 2005 under the guidance of a handful of dedicated people. With the donations made by generous people and help from a host of community sponsors, the foundation has provided approximately 30 prom dresses for several young ladies in eastern Kentucky.

The idea for the foundation grew out of a chance meeting on the Internet. Wayne, a resident of Michigan, was doing research for a trip to Kentucky with the Appalachia Service Project. Scrolling through Leslie County's unofficial website, he spotted Feltner-Collins' ad pleading for a prom dress for a local girl who couldn't afford to buy one. Wayne said, "For some reason, I decided immediately that I would help."

Wayne called the mother of four, and the two met in Hyden, Ky. Within three months of crossing paths, they created a non-profit foundation and collected more than 100 dresses for girls to borrow. "I knew that with our determination we could help so many, so we thought it would be best to make it official," Feltner-Collins said.

In its first year, the foundation was able to help five girls go to prom, and in 2006 that number increased to 25 girls in five counties. "We've grown exponentially," said Wayne. Area businesses that donate services such as manicures, makeovers, corsages and even dinners have also grown from seven the first year to more than 30 due to the media coverage that has been received. Wayne said their efforts have been highlighted by area media, including the local television station and newspapers.

Perhaps what is most impressive about the startup of this charitable cause is the fact that Wayne, the executive director, still lives in Michigan. He's currently in his first year of law school at Wayne State University in Detroit. He said that Internet availability is vital for communication among the foundation's staff.

"We usually communicate either through e-mail or by using Yahoo Messenger," he said. Wayne uses a cable modem Internet service and Feltner-Collins has a DSL line in her hometown of Hyden. Wayne said that without the high-speed services, fulfilling the foundation's mission to assist disadvantaged students with the expenses of prom would be much more difficult.

The project currently has six volunteer workers holding roles such as director of operations and media director. Three volunteers reside in another state, and the others live in different counties throughout Kentucky. Wayne said that after law school, he plans to move to Denver, but he doesn't foresee his location being an issue.

"I can still do what I do for the organization, no matter where I'm at," he said.

