

## FASHION MANUSCRIPT

By KT

*Weddings are occasions that make memories last forever. For the brides, she will never forget the day she wears her fantasy dress and walks down the aisle. Unfortunately, when the ceremony is over, that dress more or less becomes a shrine for memories past. While many brides choose to pass their dress down as an heirloom, many others will tuck it away never to be used again, and still many other women choose to make their wedding dress live on, creating hope for others. Yes, at Sheltering Arms Childrens Service, donating your wedding dress means the celebration can go on.*

*Founded in 1823 by a philanthropic New Yorker interested in helping mothers without resources, Sheltering Arms Childrens Service is currently a thriving resource of help for many New York City children. Through numerous programs and fundraising events, this charity presently aids over 3,000 of the city's children and their families. Among their newest fundraising efforts is The Bridal Garden, an idea to raise additional funds by its Chairman of the Board, and implemented by Geraldine Brower, director of development for Sheltering Arms.*

*The Bridal Garden is an exclusive bridal boutique which resells donated couture and top designer gowns for a fraction of their original price. Located at 54 West 21st Street, Suite 907, The Bridal Garden showcases bridal gowns from Vera Wang, Amsale, Ulla Maija, and Marissa. Prospective brides can save thousands of dollars on a dress, while those who donate their dresses are given a tax deduction. They also leave with gratification that their wedding was able to mean more than just a celebration of their love, but also helps young and needy children of New York.*

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*Opening in January 1998, The Bridal Garden was the answer to the government's cuts in funding for a non profit organizations. The program was founded to lessen the gap in their finances, and offer a catalyst to grow other programs. Geraldine Brower adds, "We needed to be both aggressive and creative in our fund raising strategy, so we created an upscale boutique which fills a unique niche in the retail bridal business. "*

*Currently the boutique is open five days a week by appointment only, and houses an extensive collection of dresses for all types of weddings. Showcasing sample and once worn couture and designer bridal gowns, the styles vary from simple and elegant, to princess like and traditional, to slender and sleek. All proceeds of the sales go directly to Sheltering Arms programs such as: after school programs, medical services, pre-school centers, day care programs, foster care services and adoption, and special education programs. Last Christmas, Sheltering Arms used the proceeds from The Bridal Garden to buy a present for every child in their care.*