Dear Friends of Bottomless Closet,

We are excited to share our 2018 Annual Report with you. 2018 was a year of incredible growth for Bottomless Closet, and we could not have helped as many women in need without the continued support of each and every one of you.

Last year alone we had more than 4,200 client interactions and a 16 percent increase in the number of individual clients served, creating even more opportunities for us to provide women with valuable resources and tools. Every single one of these interactions – from the clothing, shoes and accessories we provide in our boutique, to the resume help and one-on-one interview coaching – is an important step on their path to a fresh start. 2018 was also the first time we tested opening on Fridays for client appointments, laying the groundwork to reach our goal of providing services five days a week.

Since its founding in 1999, nearly 40,000 women have come through the doors of Bottomless Closet, and as we celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2019, we know that this is just the beginning.

The generosity and support of our donors, corporate partners, referral partners, volunteers, board and staff enables us to expand our reach and help even more women each year. On behalf of the women we serve, we thank you.

With gratitude,

Melissa Norden, Executive Director
Anne Blackman, Board Chair
2018 By the Numbers

4,264 Client Interactions
35,000 Pieces of Clothing Distributed
30 Professional Development Workshops
178 Career Day Attendees
2,718 Individual Women Served
22 Financial Management Workshops
26 Personal Enrichment Workshops

...and over 1,000 workshop attendees!

59% of Bottomless Closet clients were hired for the job for which they were interviewed immediately following their appointment!
The Women We Serve

Location

- 23% Bronx
- 28% Brooklyn
- 30% Manhattan
- 4% Staten Island
- 15% Queens

Age

- 36% 21-29
- 24% 30-39
- 17% 40-49
- 15% 50+
- 8% <21

Ethnicity

- 57% African American
- 25% Hispanic
- 6% White
- 3% Asian
- 9% Other

At the time of their first appointment, 66% of Bottomless Closet clients did not have a bank account.
At the time of their first appointment, 53% of Bottomless Closet clients were homeless.

Housing

- 2% Own
- 45% Renting
- 53% Homeless

Education

- 43% High School
- 18% GED
- 15% None Completed
- 11% Bachelors
- 10% Associates
- 4% Advanced
Bottomless Closet’s mission is to be the connection that inspires and guides disadvantaged New York City women to enter the workforce and achieve success. From our grassroots beginnings, we have grown into an organization that has served nearly 40,000 women in need, amassed nearly 200 dedicated volunteers and 150 referral partners, and has had over 1,000 workshop attendees just this year. As we look to the future, our founding principles of helping and empowering women in need still guide our daily work.

The Bottomless Closet experience is all about making women feel confident, prepared, and empowered to ace their job interviews, start that new job, and begin their journey to self-sufficiency.

**Attire**
Upon arriving at Bottomless Closet, each woman is paired up one-on-one with a volunteer career coach who will handle the duration of the appointment. They will begin in the boutique, where they can choose professional clothing, shoes, and accessories that will help them give a sparkling first impression.

**Resume Help**
During the second half of the appointment, they will sit down together and review their resume to make sure it best reflects their individual skills and qualifications. Our in-house resume experts will update their resume in real time, so they can leave Bottomless Closet with brand new copies printed out, and on a flash drive in several formats for their job search.
Interview Prep

While their resume is being updated, their volunteer career coach will conduct a mock interview with them. Together, they will tackle everything from the importance of shaking hands and making eye contact, to how to deliver their personal elevator pitch and best answer all the tough interview questions without getting flustered. They will practice highlighting their strengths, citing examples from their past work experience to demonstrate various skills, and even getting comfortable messaging things like a gap in employment.

By the time they leave Bottomless Closet, they will have everything they need to ace their interview and get the job. If they don’t get the job on the first try, they can come back for additional coaching before their next interview. If they get the job, we’ll give them additional coaching for success in their new job, as well as additional outfits so they will have a solid foundational wardrobe.

"I’ve had a pretty bad week. A lot of ups and downs, but today really cheered me up. I’m so happy I came here."
Workshops
Everyone who comes through our doors also gains access to our selection of workshops, whether they get the job or not. Bottomless Closet offers a wide variety of workshops in the areas of Financial Management, Professional Development, and Personal Enrichment — all aimed at making the transition into work and the path to self-sufficiency that much smoother. All workshops are provided free of charge and most include a healthy meal.

Bottomless Closet also offers a variety of career days and workshops hosted off-site by our corporate partners, where women can get an inside look at different industries and career paths, and get additional advice and coaching while further practicing their networking skills. The women we serve can also earn certificates for both our Financial Management and Professional Development workshop series, which are awarded each year at our annual graduation ceremony.

"I was treated with dignity by people who genuinely care about me."
In September 2018, Bottomless Closet was featured in an 'Ambush Makeover' segment on The TODAY Show during the fourth hour of the show, hosted by Kathie Lee and Hoda. The piece featured taped interviews with two of our clients and our celebrity supporter Susan Sarandon. Bottomless Closet Executive Director Melissa Norden was also interviewed about our mission and work. During the live segment in studio, they treated our clients to makeovers and other special gifts, including gift cards to White House Black Market.

The greatest surprise, however, came at the end of the segment, when they surprised Bottomless Closet with a donation of $17,000 worth of personal hygiene products from Unilever. The generous gift included full-size bottles of Dove deodorant, dry shampoo and body wash; Suave shampoo and conditioner; TRESemmé hair styling products; and Vaseline Intensive Care Moisturizer.

So many of our clients cannot afford these basic items, making this gift from the TODAY Show and Unilever even more appreciated.
J.Jill Increases Support for Bottomless Closet

For the last three years, Bottomless Closet has received clothing donations through J.Jill’s Gently Worn program as part of their Compassion Fund.

Two times a year, J.Jill customers can bring donations of gently worn clothing to their local J.Jill store and receive a coupon for 30% off a future purchase. Those clothing donations then find their way to Bottomless Closet and soon get a second life with the women we serve.

In 2018, J.Jill deepened its support for Bottomless Closet, awarding us a grant through their Compassion Fund for the first time, enabling us to help even more women in need.

Founded in 2002, the J.Jill Compassion Fund supports and empowers women to move forward faster and establish a better life for themselves, their children and their families. J.Jill provides assistance to local community-based organizations like Bottomless Closet across the country who are focused on development and educational programs.

Partnerships like the one we have with J.Jill enable us to not only stock our boutique with the items we need to help women feel confident as they enter the workforce, but also to fund our programming and operations so we can continue providing our clients with resume help, interview coaching, workshops and career days to help them thrive.

"I'm a new immigrant to U.S. and I am really appreciative...I will always remember that you were there when I needed it most."
Health issues took quite a toll on Bottomless Closet client Jazmith in 2013, keeping her out of work for almost four years. Unfortunately, being unemployed also took a serious toll on her finances. "After using up all of my savings and retirement funds, I started using credit cards to cover my family's expenses," she recalls. With a son in college, she had no choice but to pay for many of his educational expenses with credit cards as well. "I was charging everything, and then I was using one credit card to pay off another credit card," Jazmith admits.

After coming to Bottomless Closet for the first time, she learned about the free workshops available to clients, and decided to check out some of the Financial Management programming. "I started small, with one workshop at the time," remembers Jazmith. "But I kept going, because I love learning new things, and I felt so comfortable in that environment. There was no judgment."

In December 2018, Jazmith graduated from both workshop series, earning certificates in Financial Management and Professional Development. However, the certificates weren't the only things she gained from the workshops.

"I began paying off the credit card with the highest interest rate first, and taking advantage of 0% interest offers to eliminate my debt," says Jazmith. "I cancelled all of the unnecessary memberships I once had. I now track all my spending and stick to my budget. I am more mindful when it comes to money and how I spend it. I've even begun saving and investing."
Jazmith Makes the Financial Workshops Work for Her

(cont’d.) Jazmith even got a job as a Budget Analyst for a New York City nonprofit, where she's been working for more than two years. She's also been able to utilize some of the things she's learned in the workshops at her job. "Not only was I able to obtain practical knowledge that has helped me improve personally but also professionally. It has been very rewarding."

Beyond helping her improve her finances, Jazmith has gained many other new skills that she can apply in her daily life.

"I continue to attend career days and make regular updates to my resume and practice mock interviews, because I would love to find additional work. I am also in the process of creating a LinkedIn profile," she adds.

She's made some valuable connections, too. "I've met many ladies from different backgrounds and have become friends with them," says Jazmith.

"I have found a community that motivates me to keep learning and growing."

"I started small, with one workshop at a time. But I kept going, because I love learning new things, and I felt so comfortable in that environment. There was no judgment."

-Jazmith
Three and a half years ago, Volunteer Maggie Lear first walked through the front door of Bottomless Closet. Since she started volunteering with us, she has been able to work one-on-one with hundreds of clients, helping them to polish their resumes, coaching them on job interview skills, and helping them find the clothing that reflects their best self.

An unusual shipment of donations would arrive one day that would give Maggie a new and unique way to help pay it forward. Designer Carolina Herrera generously donated a high volume of samples to Bottomless Closet - including evening gowns, wedding dresses, and designer separates - and at first glance, staff members weren't sure what to do with the very formal pieces.

"We can't exactly give evening gowns to our clients, but we routinely have trouble keeping the boutique stocked with plus-size clothing and larger size shoes," said Executive Director Melissa Norden. "We brainstormed about how we might be able to utilize the gowns to support our inventory and other programs, and Maggie immediately stepped in to help." Opening up her home, Maggie hosted a series of incredibly successful sample sales, raising nearly $80,000 in much-needed funding for Bottomless Closet.

“I absolutely loved getting the chance to sell all of those gorgeous Carolina Herrera pieces," says Maggie. "To have 100% of the profits go to Bottomless Closet is a win-win for everyone!"
Maggie’s dedication, creativity, and her willingness to go above and beyond as a Bottomless Closet volunteer made her a natural choice for our Luise Kleinberg Volunteer of the Year Award at our 2018 Luncheon.

We know that the next time a big donation of designer gowns comes in, Maggie will be there to help us turn couture into cash.

Pictured above: Maggie (center) with dancers from Ballet Hispánico, who supported the sample sale by purchasing dresses for their annual gala.

Pictured below: Maggie (left) and her sister, Kate Lear, shopping during one of the sample sales.
Bottomless Closet's 2018 Financials

Annual Revenue: $1,291,683

- 78% Programming
- 49% Events
- 23% Foundation & Corporate
- 21% Individual
- 2% Government
- 5% Other

Annual Expenses: $1,563,080

- 11% Administrative
- 11% Fundraising
- 21% Fundraising
- 11% Programming
- 78% Programming
- 49% Events

“All of you have enhanced my quality of life by empowering me to go forward and seize the day.”

*2018 expenses have also been funded in part by a prior capacity grant used to invest in our growth initiatives.*
Our caring and dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Their support enables us to provide meaningful, individualized attention to the women we serve.

Susan S. Ach       Edna Burak       Nancy Fink       Anna Jorgensen
Bibi Ali           Bonnie Cantor   Katie Fogarty   Phyllis Josselson
Linda Alpert       Emily Carter    Margaret Fogel  Jody Kahn
Flavia Arena       Neecoll Chou    Erica Frederick Lee S. Freund
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Each financial gift we receive, no matter how big or small, helps us fulfill our mission to empower New York City women in need. Below is a list of gifts we received of $500 and above.

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BNY Mellon
Sheila and Bill Lambert

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We apologize for any inaccuracies. If your name has been left off this list, please contact us at info@bottomlesscloset.org.

"I had been looking for a job for months, but after I came to Bottomless Closet for the first time, I was offered a job the very same day as my next interview. Responses to my new resume came flooding in, and I had multiple job offers, including for higher-paying positions than the ones I applied for."

–LaToya
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Bottomless Closet is governed by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors with diverse backgrounds who commit their time and resources to ensure our continued success.

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"I felt very welcomed and didn’t feel ashamed."

Bottomless Closet thanks Founders and Chairs Emeritae Sheila Lambert and Reva Wurtzberger for their 20 years of service to the organization.
1 in 4 New York City women is living in poverty. By supporting the work of Bottomless Closet, you can make a difference in the life of a woman in need. Here are just some of the ways you can help:

**Donate**

Change the life of a woman in need today. You can make a gift online at [bottomlesscloset.org](http://bottomlesscloset.org) or by sending a check to the address below.

**Give**

Your gently worn work-appropriate clothing, shoes, purses and accessories will enable a woman to see herself in a new way.

**Volunteer**

You can join our network of dedicated and caring Career Coaches and begin changing lives!

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(212) 563-2499 | [bottomlesscloset.org](http://bottomlesscloset.org)