

“At Palm Beach State College, we are caring for the whole student by making resources available that help ensure greater success in their student and life journeys,” said Ava L. Parker, J.D., PBSC president.

Parker applauded LaTanya McNeal, Ed.D., executive dean of the Belle Glade campus, and Kimberly Lancaster, dean of academic affairs for the Belle Glade and Loxahatchee Groves campuses, for their leadership and thanked elected officials and community partners for their support of the initiative and the College.

Panther’s Closet is run by students from the [Dr. Floyd F. Koch Honors College](#) who are enrolled in a one-credit hour community-based learning course where they gain customer service, management, sales and team-building skills. They can take the course up to three times.

Alumna Aliyah Blake took the course three semesters. While she worked at the Lake Worth campus Panther’s Closet, she assisted with setting up the Belle Glade facility and attended the ribbon-cutting. The aspiring nurse graduated from PBSC last December and is planning to attend FIU in the fall. “It’s a lot of work, but you gain real-world experience and help a lot of students,” she said. “When you are in college you have to make ends meet, so it’s good to have a place where you can go to get affordable clothes for any occasion.”

Trustee Wendy Link proposed the idea for Panther’s Closet in 2016 after attending an Association of Community College Trustees conference, and in March 2017 the College [launched its first one in a refurbished classroom](#) on the Lake Worth campus with a portion of a \$45,000 gift from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. HPS Schönox, Tandus Centiva and Commercial Flooring Distributors donated supplies for the refurbishing.

Through the years, the College has gained support for Panther’s Closet, which also is open to faculty and staff to purchase and donate items. Among the partners is [Tide Cleaners](#), which serves as a drop-off location for clothing at its Boca Raton, Delray beach, Parkland and Wellington locations. It cleans and then distributes the clothes to the College.

Carolyn Williams, chair of the PBSC District Board of Trustees, was among the speakers at the celebration. “Dressing for success has never been more affordable,” she said. “The board is very much appreciative of all of the community support that comes to the College and various campuses.”