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Spruce Grove businesses help put on dream wedding

By Karen Haynes, Spruce Grove Examiner/Story Plain Reporter  
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Megan Wolfe Melnyk shares a moment with one of her and new husband, Josh Melnyk's, youngest sons. The flower arrangements were generously donated by Spruce Grove Flowers. - Photo by Blake Loates Photography

Something borrowed, something blue. Something old, something new.

And so goes the bride-to-be rhyme that countless women recite to one another in anticipation of what they expect to be the most magical day of their lives.

No doubt this playful poem is something Megan Wolfe Melnyk has thought of since she began dreaming of her own special day many years ago.

But after being recently diagnosed with Stage 4 stomach cancer and being given only one year to live, her dream began to feel farther and farther away—until Aug. 20 at 3 p.m. in Edmonton's Union Bank Hall when it all finally came true.

Megan joined the ranks of brides around the world when she married the man of her dreams, Josh Melnyk, in a wedding entirely funded through the donations and contributions by local businesses.

"It was overwhelming," Megan, 28, said, describing her emotions leading up to her long-awaited walk down the aisle.

"But as soon as I saw Josh, that changed everything—all I could see was him. I was so excited. I couldn't have asked for anything better."

Josh, 32, described the intimate affair that brought roughly 30 of their family members together as "beyond beautiful," saying "there are no words that could really describe it."

The couple has since expressed many thanks to those who contributed to their ceremony and reception.

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The day would have cost the bride and groom more than \$16,000, if not for the generosity of businesses such as Spruce Grove Flowers and Rachel's Cakes in Spruce Grove, who gave various items for the event at no cost.

"I had a little bit of time to spare and thought, 'If that's the least I can do, then I'd be more than happy to (help),' " said Rachel Kaleta, owner of Rachel's Cakes.

"The ability to reach out and help someone — I hope that one day if it was ever needed in return that someone could do a favour for me," she added.

Spruce Grove Flowers owner Heather Lesoway said she heard the couple's story and instantly knew she wanted to become involved.

"The story itself, her only being given so much time and really wanting to have her dream wedding with the man in her life. It was heart-warming," Lesoway said.

In total, 23 businesses pitched in to see the day come together, all co-ordinated through the efforts of Ben Block and Krista Turko, founders of GoZAround, a new social networking site designed to connect people in need with those who want to give.

"It was an idea that occurred to me over time as I came across people in different situations that were in a tough spot," Block said of the project that has been in the works since September 2013.

"I got thinking there were probably people out there willing to help, but there was no easy way to connect. That's what we're trying to build."

Turko, who used to live in Stony Plain, said she and Block purposely timed GoZAround's official Aug. 20 launch to coincide with Josh and Megan's wedding date.

"It was to show people how to use the skills and tools they already have to make a big difference in someone's life. Our site is not about giving money; it's about taking something that you already have within you, an ability, and using it for someone else's life," she said.

"It doesn't have to be a big deal to make a big difference. It's surprising how something that could take 15 minutes out of your day could make someone's week, month or who knows?"

Between the two, Josh and Megan have five children, including two-year-old twin boys, who Josh recently quit his job to care for.

Originally diagnosed with Stage 2 cancer, Megan underwent three rounds of chemotherapy in Saskatoon and an invasive surgery that was meant to remove a tumour in her stomach. However, doctors found the cancer had spread to her intestines and revised her prognosis to the devastating Stage 4 diagnosis.

They currently live in Saskatoon but intend to move to Edmonton in the coming months to pursue natural treatment options for Megan.

"I can't give up on her. There are too many kids that love her and she needs to see them grow up," Josh said.

To that end, Josh has begun administering whatever natural treatments he can to Megan, including Aloe Vera juice, flax seed oil, Spriulina and Vitamin C.

"You name it, if it's healthy with no side effects, I'm giving it to her."

But the treatments have cost a pretty penny, totalling \$1,900 each month — which of course is not sustainable, he explained.

In response, the couple has listed themselves on GoFundMe, a crowdfunding website, in the hope of offsetting those additional monthly costs.

But, for a few days this past week, Josh and Megan escaped the pressures of their day-to-day during a honeymoon to Banff. The couple packed up their family and planned to enjoy the final piece of their wedding story: a holiday package donated by an anonymous contributor.

"We are so thankful and really appreciative," Megan said of all they have received from GoZAround and the many Edmonton and area businesses.

"It has made me feel so much better. At least now if anything does happen to me, at least now I'm married."

To participate in GoZAround, visit [www.gozaround.com](http://www.gozaround.com) to list a request or browse the needs in the area. To donate to Megan's natural treatments, visit [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and search Let's Save Megan Wolfe Melnyk.

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