

Army vet

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Jason Lorraine was born and raised in Salem, but spent 20 years in the Army, stationed in Texas. He served four tours in Iraq and Afghanistan before retiring in 2016, moving home and making plans to start his barbecue business.

“Our whole family built it and worked on it. It’s a family-owned business.”

The Lorraines’ daughters are also enlisted, Kelsey, 19, in the U.S. Air Force, and Courtney, 18 in the Army. Both are currently in basic training.

It was this military affiliation that struck a chord with many who learned of the Lorraine family’s plight.

A friend, Ken Carey, owner of Baked & Loaded Potatoes, set up a Go Fund Me campaign with the goal of raising \$25,000. It was hoped donations would help offset the shortfall between the insurance covering the trailer, an estimated \$5,000, and the actual value with the installed equipment (smoker, grill, refrigeration, signage and so forth), which wasn’t covered.

The campaign was shared via social media more than 400 times. In a month it surpassed its goal with 406 people contributing \$28,559.

“Most of them,” said Lorraine, “I have no idea who they are.”

The comments section of the Go Fund Me page could easily be your feel-good read of the week.

Donor after donor gave, sharing stories of their own military affiliation, eager to demonstrate “vets helping vets.”

Daniel Robbins wrote “Navy Vet. helps a Vet. and Retiree. Thank you SIR!”

James Barbarino commented, “good luck brother from a Navy veteran.”

Tony Melton expressed his gratitude to Jason and to Julie as well.

“Thank you for your service to our country. And to your wife as well, because I know when one family member serves, the entire family serves. I will look you up if I’m ever in your area and try your BBQ.”

But it wasn’t only military members who were moved by the Lorraines’ story.

It also resonated with two other, equally passionate communities: barbecue pit masters and Sasquatch fans.

Bigfoot, big heart

The Pacific Northwest has this thing



Squatchy’s BBQ trailer caught flame on July 15. COURTESY OF SQUATCHY’S BBQ

for Sasquatch, Squatchy’s BBQ name-sake, and the Lorraines had plugged into that passionate community of true believers.

They served barbecue at Beachfoot, an annual gathering of Bigfoot fans held on the Oregon coast.

One such fan, Todd Neiss, gave \$100 and rallied others to do the same.

The barbecue community also stepped up.

Justin and Patrick Holt, of Holt Brothers BBQ, a competition barbecue team in Charlotte, North Carolina chipped in, as did Texan Roger Davis.

“INCOMING help from the Country Club competition barbecue team of Collin County, Texas. Looking forward to your Phoenix ascent from the flames of adversity, and a SMOKIN re-entry into your business,” wrote Davis on the Go Fund Me page.

One of the larger gifts came when Kingsford Charcoal contributed \$2,000. A spokesperson for the Clorox Co.-owned brand said, “we always try to support the barbecue community and we were happy to help.”

Fellow local food truck owners, through the Oregon Food Truck Association, contributed \$500, saying “hope to see you back on the road soon!”

The Upside of Fear author and speak-

er Weldon Long made the largest contribution, \$5,000, after learning about the Lorraines’ situation online.

“Learning to build a business was my ticket to a prosperous life. But building a small business is difficult under normal circumstances — just making payroll, taxes, overhead, etc. When I read about the food trailer getting destroyed I just thought, ‘Holy cow! talk about making things next to impossible!’”

“I have enormous respect and admiration for the men and women who serve our nation and make the sacrifices to protect the liberty and freedom for everyone,” Long told the Statesman Journal via email. “So when I saw the Go Fund Me link, I wanted to help.”

Smaller gifts, ranging from \$5 to a few hundred rolled in, said Lorraine, “from all across the country.” Tampa and Jacksonville, Florida; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Dallas, Texas.

The couple couldn’t believe it.

“The way it took off it was crazy,” Lorraine said. “We thought we could get, you know, a thousand dollars because we’re really nobody, just a little barbecue business ... but it just skyrocketed.”

“Its very touching,” he said, adding “how grateful we are for the support.”

A fresh start with Bubba

Bubba, Squatchy’s new smoker, is a 10-foot long behemoth.

But it’s not on wheels.

The former Scallywags and Kelly’s space at 1005 N First Ave. in Stayton is Squatchy’s new home — a brick and mortar restaurant complete with a drive-through window.

The Lorraines painted the interior bright red and added a chair rail of corrugated metal. Wooden ‘squatch signs will hang on the bathroom doors.

Two of the grates salvaged from the Squatchy’s trailer hang on a wall, a memorial to how the business began.

Squatchy’s BBQ opened quietly in Stayton on Sept. 15. Next spring, once they’ve gotten into a rhythm, the Lorraines will roll out a new barbecue trailer in time for warm weather food truck rallies and events.

“It’ll be the ‘squatch shack 2.0,’” Lorraine said.

Emily Teel is the Food & Drink Editor at the Statesman Journal. Contact her at eteel@statesmanjournal.com, Facebook, or Twitter. See what she’s cooking and where she’s eating this week on Instagram: @emily_teel

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