

RUSHING TO HELP

When I first moved to Lincoln County it took a little while before I stopped questioning the decision to pack up all of my belongings, my mother and the person to whom I would later be married and move 600 miles for a job.

One of the places that started to make me feel like it had been a good decision after all was a small farm that had a cute stand that sold the organic produce grown there and was adorned with metal sculptures made by the partner of the farmer, a talented artist whose work can be seen in such places as Lincoln City's Regatta Park.

The farmer and his wife were both valued members of the community, contributing food, time and beauty, and when the house they lived in burned to the ground, that community came together to ensure they very quickly had a home again.

Watching contractors donate time and ability, vendors donate materials and others donate funds to build a home for their neighbors was when I really knew I had made a good move. And recently two of the people that were involved with that fundraising effort, musicians June and Joren Rushing, were recipients of another example of the strong community found here.

"We do have an amazing community and it includes a tribe of musicians that make up the backbone of the music scene," said local musician Richard Silen. "When one of our own finds themselves in need, we rally around that need."

The need came from a perfect storm of events for the Rushings when Joren was hospitalized with a critical intestinal infection, the stress of which caused an underlying heart condition for June to come to the surface, sending her to the emergency room only days after her husband.

"I thought I was having a panic attack but I was actually having a heart attack," June said. "It turned out I had congestive heart failure and needed triple bypass surgery."

Had Joren's medical emergency not triggered an event that finally forced her to seek medical care the story may have had an entirely different ending.

"As musicians we don't have great health



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care options so we tend to put off going to doctor," June said. "I'm pretty sure what happened with Joren ended up saving my life."

The bills however, began to pile up, but luckily friends like Rebecca Ottensmann and Lozelle Jennings, who has since passed away, were already working on a fundraiser.

"Without the money that was raised for us we would have lost everything," June said. "It doesn't come naturally to me to ask for help, I'd rather be the one giving it, but this community helped us in ways I can never fully thank them for."

The help came in many forms including a big party at the Eagles club in Newport, which raised roughly \$5,000 for the couple held so dear by friends and fans.

"The Eagles volunteered the venue," Joren said. "There was such a great turnout that there was nowhere to sit; hundreds of people came."

Help also came in the form of dog walking, food and company.

"There were several weeks after her surgery where June couldn't be left alone but I still needed to be able to leave for short trips," Joren said. "Whenever I needed it there was always someone there to sit with her; it was amazing."

June had been hesitant to air her personal woes on social media but when she did she found an outpouring of support.

"I finally started sharing my story because I thought giving a voice to the symptoms might help others seek appropriate medical help," she said. "The



June and Joren Rushing

power and energy of so many people pulling for me helped me go into the surgery with much less fear."

The current health report for the Rushings is very positive. June's recovery from surgery is going well and Joren ended up avoiding a surgery he was originally told he would need. They are back to playing live music, though with a new level of appreciation for everyone in their circles both close and wide.

"We are so genuinely grateful for everything that's been done," June said. "I want to make sure to also send out a big thank you to Marilee Harrison, who

arranged the food train, the dog walking and a separate GoFundMe account. Whether it was good wishes or tasty dishes, we were well taken care of."

Silen, who is originally from Austin, calls the way neighbors support each other here a rare find.

"It's beautiful to see this kind of thing happen in a community and especially around music," he said. "And when it's time for June and Joren to come out for someone else, I know they will."

Stay connected to the Lincoln County music scene by joining the Newport Rocks! Facebook page.