

THE CHILLIWACK PROGRESS



‘No one deserves it more’

By Jessica Murdy - Chilliwack Progress
November 09, 2007

Glenda Standeven is congratulated by friends and family members after the unveiling of her newly renovation living and dining room from HGTV's Makeover Wish on Tuesday. JENNA HAUCK/ PROGRESS

A white van backs into the driveway of 9872 Candow Street. On the side is a logo for HGTV's Makeover Wish. Immediately after stopping, a sliding door opens to reveal boxes, buckets and shelves filled with tools.

Workers weave their way through the small crowd on the front lawn. A man with a mop goes in the front door, and the glare of studio lights comes through the entrance.

A woman emerges with a crate of assorted items, and the flash of light returns.

It's been chaotic here all weekend, but there's no panic now. Everything is ready.

Family and friends huddle on the grass, under two tents sheltering them from the rain. They check their watches. Many have been waiting for at least an hour, and as the minutes pass even more arrive.

They talk about the living room, the new flat screen television visible in the window, and how beautiful everything looks.

"I can't think of anyone who deserves it more," one long time friend says.

"There's not a chance she won't like it," another one offers.

But they're all wondering how much longer this will take. There are now about 40 friends and family waiting under the tents, and each one is eager to see her face light up.

"Where are they keeping her?" one supporter asks.

"I think they're over in the park," another one answers.

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'No one deserves it more' – MOW con't

Half a block away, the woman of the hour sits restlessly in the passenger seat of her car. Her husband and mother wait with her. She's nervous, fidgeting in place and wondering aloud what her house will look like. And she's excited, her eyes wide and scanning the faces of the people around her for any clues.

"It's not pink is it?" she asks. "Someone said it was pink."

It's been three days of not knowing how her house is transforming. Three days of no sleep, and the anticipation is killing her.

"Is there a crowd?" she asks a crew member, truly unsure. "Did people come?"

Crew members mike her up, and now all she can do is wait.

"They'll call me when they're ready for you," the production assistant says.



When Glenda Standeven finally arrives in front of her house, the crowd goes wild. They close in on her car. But she doesn't jump up and down to greet them. She doesn't run to her front door.

She can't. It's been almost 20 years since Standeven's leg, hip and pelvis were amputated along one side, as a means to rid her body of bone cancer. It worked, and she's been cancer-free ever since. She makes her way around on one leg and two crutches, preferring not to use a prosthetic leg.

Still, she works through the crowd giving hugs to several people. First to Erin Cebula, the host of Makeover Wish. Then to Bonny Holmes, the good friend who nominated her six weeks ago.

It was a whirlwind weekend for Standeven, who was surprised on Sunday morning by a television crew. She was then whisked away to a villa at The Falls, with her husband Rick.

It was a monumental task, and a secret nearly everyone in Standeven's circle was in on. For the month prior to this day, they connived to keep her in the dark. They lied. They held back.

And it all led up to this very moment.

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As she walks through the front door of her home, emotion rocks through Standeven's body.

"Oh my gosh," she thinks. She gasps and looks around. She's in disbelief, and even begins to tear up.

From the slate wall accenting the fireplace in the living room, through to the refined dining space and new office space, the entire one side of Standeven's home has not one item out of place. Not one oversight. It's modern, it's sleek, and it's completely replaced the furniture and layout the family lived with for 25 years.

"I'm blessed," she thinks, and just then the camera crew lets her family flood into the home. Soon, the house is elbow to elbow with well-wishers, and the production team waits in the kitchen and watches as their hard work is handed over to the Standeven family.

The 'reveal' is usually a happy occasion, a rewarding end to a satisfying job.

But this is the last shooting of Makeover Wish, as the show has not yet been picked up for another season.

They take their own group photos and hug each other, too. This may be the last time they all work together.

"Well, I don't want to say it too loud," the director discreetly says to Cebula. "But that's a wrap."

It's 3 a.m. the following morning and the rain is still falling. Standeven is awake and, once again, walking through her living room. Her dining room. Her new office, where she can practise reflexology and plan her motivational speaking engagements.

It's settling in. It's starting to fit.

"It's not a dream," she thinks. "It's real."

Sure, there will be a few adjustments. The old dining room table is coming back inside, she decides. And family photos will once again find their place on the walls.

But the details aren't important. Standeven realizes that every time she walks through her home she won't see the new furniture. Instead, she'll see each and every person who believed she deserved such a treat. And she'll remember how much she is loved by them.

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