

## Neighbors' goodwill multiplies Community Bands Together to help mom with ALS

By George Merritt  
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God things.

That's what Shelly Goss started calling them.

Earthly explanations seem inadequate for the flourish of donations, favors and blessed coincidences that have arrived since her neighbor Lisa Nichols was diagnosed with a fatal disease.

In a couple of weeks, Nichols' neighbors in Greenwood Village will put on a benefit concert to help her through the hardships of ALS, more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

The event started with much more modest expectations.

A get-together or a barbecue - maybe a band in the driveway.

"We were all just like, 'What can we do to help?'" Goss said. "And it just grew."

So many people joined in that they started a formal group, Band Together. Soon, the Greenwood Village City Council offered a park and \$1,700 worth of services.

Now, politicians such as U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard, Reps. Bob Beauprez and Tom Tancredo, state Treasurer Mike Coffman and Lt. Gov. Jane Norton have offered their time.

And the momentum continues to build.

Businesses have agreed to donate all kinds of supplies. Neighborhood children are donating the change they make selling fruit roll-ups and lemonade.

"It is one of those deals you look at and say, 'I don't care who it is or where they are, I want to help,'" Arapahoe County Commissioner Bernie Zimmer said. "It is about helping one's neighbors."

On Aug. 29, Band Together will hold a family festival and concert at Village Greens Park in Greenwood Village. About 70 items worth more than \$13,000 will be offered in a silent auction. Lunch with 12 political leaders also is up for bid.

The group wanted to give all the proceeds from the auction and ticket sales to Nichols. But she would not agree unless they gave some to other ALS sufferers.

"It has to live on past me," Nichols said.

Band Together organizer Susie Roy said they never expected so much attention.

"As it has grown, you see that the world is full of good hearts," Roy said. "It reaffirms your belief in human nature."

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a degenerative neurological disease with no cure. It causes muscle failure and eventually death. About 5,000 Americans are diagnosed each year.

Nichols said she first attributed her ALS symptoms to bad brakes on her car. Now she is short of breath, and uses a cane to get around and care for her seven children.

She blushes when reminded about how many people have rallied around her. She said it has been a powerful experience to be so cursed, yet so blessed.

"A lot of good can come out of one bad," she said. "It's enough to make you forget that you have this; then you try to take a step. But my faith is growing. My faith and my family."

Go to [www.ccvillagenorth.org](http://www.ccvillagenorth.org) for more information on Band Together.

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