

From heartache to hope: A canceled wedding finds new meaning

When a Newport wedding was called off, one bride donated the vendor services to another facing terminal illness.

By Arushi Jacob. Published November 17, 2024.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/11/17/lifestyle/wish-upon-a-wedding-helps-new-hampshire-couple/>

When then-bride-to-be Sophie Escoll woke up on July 28, she realized the pit in her stomach wasn't just from cold feet. At that point, her Newport wedding was three weeks away and would become a day she decided not to move forward with. But, even after the most difficult conversations were had, she had one more call to make: her wedding planner.

With nearly two years of [wedding planning](#) behind them, the wedding's cancellation was considered last minute by industry standards, according to Lindsey Shaktman, Escoll's lead planner at Mass.-based [Mavinhouse Events](#). While the family worked with Shaktman to alert the vendors who had been contracted for the wedding, Escoll's mother told Shaktman that she "just wished somebody could benefit from what had happened."

Her words sparked a light bulb for Shaktman, who introduced the idea of donating the wedding's transferable services through [Wish Upon a Wedding](#).

Established in 2010, Wish Upon a Wedding is a Chicago-based nonprofit dedicated to granting weddings and vow renewals to couples facing terminal illness or life-altering health circumstances; Escoll's donation helped Wish Upon a Wedding provide its 300th experience.

The suggestion immediately appealed to Escoll, who had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2020 and underwent two surgeries before being declared cancer-free in April 2021. Still completing regular six-month check-ups, Escoll found that the idea of donating the wedding services to a cancer patient "hit especially close to home."

The recipients would become Moira Legault and Tyler Ferron of Nashua, N.H. Legault met her now-husband in a chance encounter at a Nashua mall six years ago. The pair hit it off and "started hanging out every single day, and started dating not very long after that," says Legault.

In February 2022, Legault, who had been working as a real estate company manager and living with Ferron, was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of terminal brain cancer.

Legault, now 27, has committed to living her life to the fullest.

“[When I got diagnosed], we had been dating for a while and getting married had been something on my mind for a few years,” said Legault. “If I hadn’t gotten the cancer diagnosis, I don’t think anything would have changed.”

While Legault’s terminal diagnosis was devastating, the couple decided to explore possible options.

“I was curious because you hear of charities that help kids with terminal illnesses, but not about charities helping adults,” said Ferron, 27. “I was trying to see if those existed and that’s how I found [Wish Upon a Wedding].”

The couple contacted the nonprofit in June and were matched with planner Azinga Ming, who arranged for a Nov. 7 wedding at the [Amherst Woman’s Club in Amherst](#). Use of the 19th-century Italianate Renaissance mansion was provided at no cost, courtesy of the venue. Soon after, a team of Massachusetts vendors — including wedding planner Mavinhouse Events, and rental companies PEAK Event Services and Kadeema Rentals — joined the project, transferring services that had been booked for Escoll’s wedding.

The intimate afternoon ceremony was officiated by Ferron’s brother, Ashton Ferron, and was filled with love and joy, according to Ming, who was the on-site planner for the day.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen a wedding party laugh as much as Moira’s,” said Ming. “They kept her spirit high, and really took in those moments.”

Ming and Shaktman collaborated to incorporate Legault’s dream vision, combining organic outdoor elements with 1920s Art Deco aesthetics.

Additional donated services from vendors included arrangements by Until We Wed Flower Co. and catering from Wheelhouse Farm, both of Amherst, as well as confections by Carefree Cakery of North Amherst, with Boston photographer Gleb Budilovsky and videographer Vincent Luo there to capture the day. The newly assigned team helped to organize the finer details, from chairs to linens and glassware.

While most weddings are a day of high energy and constant motion for newlyweds, Ming designed Legault’s itinerary to be more relaxed, allowing her to take breaks when needed. Still, Legault danced with her father to Van Morrison’s “Brown Eyed Girl,” which her father sang along to while on the dance floor.

“I just wanted everyone to have a good time,” said Legault.