

Charitable Bridal Expo Comes to Phoenix

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On Aug. 29, Phoenix brides-to-be will be in for a treat—the traveling bridal expo Brides Against Breast Cancer will make the Arizona Grand Resort & Spa their storefront for the day. But brides will be able to benefit more than just themselves at the event; revenue generated from dress sales will also benefit those with breast cancer.

The idea for Brides Against Breast Cancer started on the West Coast before being acquired by the Health Support Network. "It was started from a boutique manager who had...breast cancer and wanted to tie the two concepts together and create a pink purpose to help those impacted by cancer," says Erin Roundtree, Bridges Against Breast Cancer show manager.

Since the original concept, Brides ABC has grown and now visits approximately 130 cities annually, named the Tour of Gowns. At each city, Brides ABC hires between 15-20 local wedding professions and has between 400 to 600 deeply discounted gowns stocked, from new designer dresses donated by boutiques to gently worn from a past bride.

The event is helpful to brides with any budget—their gowns range from \$75 to \$1,800. Brides ABC also offers a layaway plan for brides-to-be who can't afford to pay for their dress in full on the day of the expo. Instead, they can pay 20 percent of the dress cost on the expo day and then pay in installments up until two months before their wedding.

At the Phoenix event, guests will have two ticket options: VIP or general admission. General admission gets anyone admission to the event starting at 3 p.m. and the ability to purchase a gown. VIP on the other hand gets brides-to-be the first look at wedding gowns with admission starting at 11 a.m. VIP guests will also be able to snack on light bites, sip champagne and participate in free giveaways. VIPs will also receive a \$600 gift certificate for a wedding band set.

Revenue from the nationwide events are donated to the Health Support Network, which Roundtree says has about 150 free support program ranging from nutrition to education to fitness that are offered to cancer patients, family members and caregivers.

Health Support Network also has a physical campus allowing cancer patients to receive one-on-one support. "We are based out of Sarasota, Florida, so in Sarasota we have the Center for Building Hope and that's just like the Health Support Network but it's a campus that we fund physically," Roundtree says. "And cancer patients can come talk to doctors one on one. And I've actually been able to contribute that personally."

Unfortunately, Roundtree says that nearly everyone who participates in Brides ABC, from vendors to brides-to-be, have been affected with breast cancer in some way, whether they suffered with the disease or know someone who has. But they enjoy being able to give back to a disease that takes so much. "It's comforting for everyone who attends our events, even if they don't purchase a gown with us," Roundtree says. "To know that they're making a difference and they're helping those that need it the most."