

## CHRISTMAS HAS COME EARLY FOR A WOUNDED SOLDIER

Christmas Can Cure and The Eureka Casino Resort are giving a deserving soldier and his bride the wedding of their dreams

Wounded veteran, Kevin Hardin, and his bride, Lillian May, will celebrate their wedding this Veteran's Day weekend on November 13, 2010, with their friends and family, thanks to the Eureka Casino Resort in Mesquite, Nevada, through their partnership with Christmas Can Cure and the Wounded Warrior Project, two organizations who work to serve the needs of injured veterans. The couple will also be featured in an upcoming episode of TLC's hit series, "*Say Yes to the Dress.*"

In 2007, Kevin Hardin, a 21 year old Front Line Army Medic, was severely injured in Iraq when the Hum-V he was driving was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG). He endured over 32 surgeries over two years. Kevin has severe injuries to both of his arms including a fused wrist and the loss of fingers. He has more than a dozen pieces of shrapnel in his brain which are inoperable. These injuries along with two years of operations and rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center would be more than enough to bring a young man down. But that is not Kevin Hardin, and that is not this story. While at Walter Reed, Kevin met Lillian May. Lillian began to assist Kevin with parts of his recovery. "With so much going on, you don't really think about the possibility of a relationship starting," said Lillian. What started out as a caring gesture quickly became much more and on August 29, 2009 the couple became engaged. In the face of life's greatest setbacks, Kevin Hardin's fate was that he would find the love of his life.

The young couple, facing big challenges believed bringing their families together for a dream wedding was all but impossible. Kevin and Lillian's excitement at finding love, combined with the challenges of little money and a geographically diverse family, caused them to do something spontaneous. The couple eloped at a convenience store turned court house in Killeen, Texas, while on a trip to Ft. Hood on April 16, 2010. Though Kevin and Lillian's families were happy for them, this was not the wedding that Kevin's mother had in mind for her eldest son. Kevin's injuries and subsequent treatments had drained much of family's resources. She began combing the internet for organizations that might be able to do something for Kevin and Lillian. As fate would have it, she found the organization, Christmas Can Cure, and wrote the following email:

*"Hello - my son is a wounded soldier from Iraq, and spent two years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and underwent over 32 surgeries. My son recently married his caregiver in Ft. Hood, Texas which is where he now resides even though he just retired from the U.S. Army at the young age of 24. My son would love nothing more than to have a "real" wedding*

*ceremony and a "real" honeymoon since he could not have that due to financial circumstances. Is that something that Christmas Can Cure can possibly help my son with? My son's dream is to honeymoon in Hawaii but anything would be greatly appreciated. I would also appreciate any suggestions or advice that you could possibly give me to help make my son's wishes become a reality. If my son had never been injured in Iraq, he would have never met his love Lillian who worked at Walter Reed and was assigned to his care. Thank you so very much."*

That e-mail was received by Christmas Can Cure founder, Andre Carrier. What Kevin's mother had no way of knowing was that Andre was also the Chief Operating Officer of the Eureka Casino Resort, in Mesquite, Nevada. After reading her message, Andre immediately forwarded it to friend and colleague, Greg Lee, the Resort's President, and owner. Within hours the two men hatched a plan to give Kevin and Lillian the wedding they had dreamed of.

"Kevin and Lillian have a special and powerful story about finding love in the face of adversity, but it is also about service and family. It is essential to celebrate both this story and the two of them. It is a great privilege to host their wedding and to bring them to Mesquite, a small town that values and honors the contributions of our American servicemen and women," said Eureka Casino Resort President, Greg Lee.

The Resort is not only paying for all of the wedding festivities, but also paying to fly in all of Kevin and Lillian's immediate family and wedding party from across the country. The families are coming from Cleveland and Cortland, Ohio, Debary and Jupiter, Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

"The goal of the wedding in Mesquite is not only to celebrate Kevin and Lillian's love, sacrifice and commitment, but to involve the entire community in raising awareness and serving the needs of veterans", said Lee

"Christmas Can Cure is a network of people who are actively looking to fulfill the needs and wishes of severely injured veterans" said Carrier. "It is work that inspires us as everywhere we look, there are people excited to help."

Carrier and Christmas Can Cure ("CCC") have been able to reach out to friends to help make the wedding special in many ways. Perhaps most notably, friends at Pleasant Holidays and Sheraton Waikiki and Maui have donated the couple's honeymoon in Hawaii. CCC also reached out to the TLC network to include Lillian on their television program, "Say Yes to the Dress" which films brides selecting their wedding dresses and tells their "love stories." The Eureka Casino Resort has provided a budget for the dress and flew Kevin, Lillian and Lillian's mother to the filming. After the wedding, Lillian has volunteered to pass her dress along to other military brides in need. Other partners have generously donated services for the wedding: Bliss Salon in Mesquite, NV will provide make-up, hair and nails for the wedding party, Days Remember Flower Shoppe in Overton, NV will provide the flowers. Al's Formal Wear will provide the tuxedos for the wedding party and TFV Photography and Five Stars Creative both out of Las

Vegas, NV will provide the photography and video services. "I am thankful and excited; excited not only about the wedding but also to meet people in the community who have opened their heart to Lillian and me , and have done so much for both of us," said Kevin.

### **About Christmas Can Cure**

Christmas Can Cure (CCC) is a 501c3 originally founded by the Carrier family of Jackson, New Hampshire. The organization seeks to give military families in need the opportunity to experience a perfect Christmas. With the help of the Wounded Warrior Project, Christmas Can Cure gives selected wounded warriors and their families a Christmas to remember. Wounded warrior families have been welcomed with open arms by the small town and the groundswell of support lead to the creation of Christmas Can Cure West in Park City in 2009.

Many veterans have spent one or more Christmas's deployed on active duty; wounded veterans may have spent Christmas in a rehabilitation hospital. CCC was formed to reenergize and renew the memories, meaning and possibilities of Christmas. CCC also seeks to provide a vehicle to help grateful citizens show their thanks to the men and women who have sacrificed so much in service to our country. For more information, visit: [www.ChristmasCanCure.org](http://www.ChristmasCanCure.org).

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

The mission of the Wounded Warrior Project is to honor and empower wounded warriors. Its purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured men and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, FL. To get involved and learn more, visit [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

### **About Eureka Casino Resort**

The Eureka Casino Resort is an intimate, newly renovated, 214-room resort located in Mesquite, Nevada, 35 miles south of St. George, Utah. The hotel recently renovated each guest room, and built a resort pool and cabana with scenic views of Mesquite's red-topped mesas. The casino is designed for guest comfort and features slot and video poker machines; table games include blackjack, craps, roulette, and more. The casino has Mesquite's only 24-hour poker room with a race and sports book. The Eureka offers three full service restaurants: Experience: The Buffet, Mesquite's largest and only live action buffet; The Courtyard Café; and Eureka's signature restaurant, Gregory's. The Eureka hosts weddings, meetings and golf outings in its Grand Canyon Ballroom and meeting rooms. Additional information is available online at: [www.EurekaMesquite.com](http://www.EurekaMesquite.com).