

# Friends, family hold fundraiser to support local businessman

Posted by Lonnie Allen on August 13th, 2014



*FULL HOUSE: Friends and family gathered on Wednesday at Buffalo Wild Wings in Big Rapids to raise money for Lee Johnson, owner of Johnson Automotive Repair in Big Rapids. Johnson was injured on July 2, when a truck slipped off the hoist and pinned him underneath the vehicle breaking his back and leg. (Pioneer photo/Lonnie Allen)*

**BIG RAPIDS —** Many friends and family gathered at Buffalo Wild Wings in Big Rapids on Wednesday to help raise money for Lee Johnson and his family after an accident sent him to the hospital in July.

Johnson, of Johnson's Automotive Repair in Big Rapids, was working on a truck at his shop on July 2, when it slipped off the hoist and pinned him underneath the vehicle, breaking his back and leg.

The community has supported Johnson and his family after word about his accident spread. Johnson's wife, Melanie, said the support from everyone is tremendous.



*SKYPE: Lee Johnson, owner of Johnson Automotive Repair in Big Rapids smiles from his hospital bed on Wednesday during a video chat with friends and family holding a fundraiser for him at Buffalo Wild Wings in Big Rapids. Johnson was injured on the job on July 2, when truck slipped off the hoist and pinned him underneath the vehicle breaking his back and leg. (Pioneer photo/Lonnie Allen)*

"It's really neat to see the community coming together in lots of different ways," Melanie said. "It's flowers and cards, help with mowing the grass and watching the kids, I see how people can come together through different methods and help out. I see how much my husband is loved from everyone."

Johnson's employee Bill Pease was working the day of the accident and with the help of two other employees helped free Johnson and get him to the hospital.

"It was the worst day of my life," Pease said about seeing Johnson under the truck. "I didn't know if he was alive until Lee said, 'Get this truck off of me.' Three of us miraculously lifted the truck off him and we were able to drag him out. It was a rough day."

Pease is grateful to see everyone out supporting Johnson and his family.

"Seeing our community come together to help Lee is encouraging," Pease said. "We have many customers and friends of Lee's here tonight and it's great."

The money raised from the 20 percent of sales on Wednesday will be used to help pay medical bills and help the family, said Steve Cassidy, Big Rapids Buffalo Wild Wings general manager.

An account in Johnson's name has been set up at the Independent Bank in Big Rapids for people who would like to make a donation.



*MUSIC: David Yonker, of the David Yonker Band performs on Wednesday at Buffalo Wild Wings in Big Rapids during a fundraiser for Lee Johnson. (Pioneer photo/Lonnie Allen)*