

## ***Garage Sale Gal*** **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**



***Garage Sale Gal***

***Sale amazes all; warms the heart***

***Lynda Hammond***

Never underestimate the power of a garage sale. “I never expected anything like this. It makes me cry to think how nice people are.”

Michelle Todd has cancer. Family and friends are raising money to help cover the hospital bills. Their garage sale was huge--spanning the front yards of two homes in Mesa. They sold furniture, appliances, clothes, collectibles, toys and even a guinea pig—which brought in \$20. Some business owners contributed items to the cause, too, supplying merchandise. Probably the most touching donation came from a little 10-year-old girl. “She handed me an envelope and told me she was saving up for a cell phone but said our cause was more important. That’s really special,” Michelle says. The envelope contained \$103.

There’s no easy way to find out you have cancer but Michelle discovered it at a time in her life when she should have been celebrating. Michelle, 28, was seven months pregnant when she learned she had Ewing’s Sarcoma—a rare bone cancer seen mostly in children. Doctors induced labor and she gave birth to her daughter a few days later. Mom and daughter, who weighed only 4 lbs., spent two weeks in the hospital together--Jenna Mae getting care in the neo-natal unit and Michelle getting chemotherapy. “I was allowed to take chemo up there with her. But it was really scary. I just wanted my baby at home and I just wanted to take care of her. You know that’s my job. I’m a mom.”

Diagnosed in January, it’s been a rough new year for Michelle as she continues surgery and chemo. Meantime, it’s fundraisers, such as this garage sale, that really help to lift her spirits. “It makes me happy to know that there are so many nice people out there that care. And so many people didn’t even buy anything they just came up and gave us money.”

Betty Brownlee was doing her part. She spent \$1 on four finger nail files and was still shopping. Betty says the energy and spirit at the sale was inspiring. “Oh, I think it’s awesome. It’s great that people can get all this together and do it for someone who needs help. There are still good people in the world,” says Betty.

Michelle says the big sale brought in \$3000. And they’re so happy with the outcome they’re already making plans for another one.

A garage sale is a win-win situation for everyone involved. Donors clean out the no-longer-needed clutter and recipients bring in the much-appreciated cash. If you want to organize a fundraising garage sale, here are a few tips.

### ***Organize a garage sale fundraiser***

**\*Gather items-** Tell friends and family what you're doing. All of us have something to donate to a garage sale. Contact business owners who may be willing to throw in some things.

**\*Advertise-** Get the word out about your sale. Take out ads in newspapers and on Web sites.

**\*Popular days-** Hold the sale on Friday and Saturday. Friday's are great for garage sales because there are fewer sales so you'll have less competition.



(pic by Lynda Hammond) Michelle Todd of Queen Creek with daughter, Jenna Mae, 4 months, is thrilled with her recent fundraising sale. Michelle is fighting a rare form of cancer. Her hair had been long—past her waist—until she gave some of it to “Locks of Love” (a charity that makes wigs for cancer victims) and lost the rest to chemotherapy. She isn't comfortable wearing wigs or hats and often people stare. So, she wears a t-shirt that reads: Got Chemo? “I just thought if I had a shirt like that people would understand why I'm bald.”

### **MY FAVORITE FIND**

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Do you have a garage sale find you love? Something that makes you smile when you look at it? Share it with us. Send us your picture. Include your name, email address and phone number and email it to: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Watch for the story of *your* treasure in this column!

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*Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.*

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