

# "Stand With Dan" GoFundMe Established For Well-Known Photographer, Family Man, Friend To Many

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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BETHALTO - A [GoFundMe](#) titled "Stand With Dan" has been established for well-known area photographer Dan Cruz of Bethalto. Dan had major surgery after a sudden spinal medical discovery last week and is in recovery.

These are the comments from Kelsey Hawkins, who set up this GoFundMe to assist with Dan Cruz's huge medical expenses:

"Dan is a son, a brother, a father, a grandfather, a talented photographer and a friend to many. If you don't see Dan at courtside or the sidelines of a field somewhere capturing high school sports, you can find him cheering on his grandsons, Kaden and Jackson at

their sporting events and or spending time with his granddaughters Rainah, Vada, and Rylah.

"He always gave himself to be there for others. That being photographing those special sporting game moments, sharing his camera talents with aspiring local photographers, or lending a hand to a friend. You can always count on Dan!

"On Wednesday, December 13, 2023, while capturing a basketball game, he felt back pain where he thought he pulled a muscle. The following day, the pain did not lessen but increased so he visited a local Urgent Care facility for relief. While he was there, they observed his blood pressure was high along with being unsteady on his feet, an ambulance was called for him.

"He was transported to a local hospital where they began administering medication to lower his blood pressure and address the high level of lactic acid. After receiving two MRI's, and losing the sensation of his left leg, the hospital staff agreed that we would need a higher level of care. An ambulance was dispatched to transport him to St. Louis University (SLU) hospital.

"The team of SLU doctors reviewing his case realized that he needed emergency spinal surgery after three CT scans and two more MRIs, they saw something taking over his spinal cord. Before he was wheeled down to the operation room, he lost the feeling of his lower extremities such as his right leg. The leading surgeon talked to the family who was present, quickly explained what was going to happen and led them into prayer."

Hawkins continued with these thoughts in the GoFundMe info: "During the surgery, they saw his medical issue was much bigger than expected. A hematoma ruptured and had completely covered the inside of his spinal cord (ranging from T-10 to below L-5). They were able to remove the blood and flush out around the spinal cord.

"After the surgery, his neurosurgeon spoke to the family about the challenges that he was about to face. We were told that the possibility of him walking again was very slim where the odds given to us was 95 percent of losing his mobility. The issue that caused the hematoma was due to the arterial venous malformation in the spine where some of the arteries ruptured.

"Once he moved to the recovery room, we learned that he could move his legs and feet, we took that as a very good sign. In the days afterward, while his progress was slow, he was moving in the right direction. To ensure the surgery was successful in removing the malformed arteries, another procedure, spinal angiogram, was performed which lasts 12 hours."

The GoFundMe description closed with the following: "While he recovers, plans are being made so Dan can begin regaining his leg strength at a rehab facility that specializes in spinal cord injuries.

"With the mountain of medical bills that he will be facing, rehab care, and any modifications to his home, we need your assistance in getting Dan back to what he loves – his family and returning to life before December 14."

*We join the GoFundMe organizers and urge residents to please show their financial support for this wonderful Bethalto man with any help they can.*

[Click here for the GoFundMe for Dan Cruz.](#)