

Going to Extremes

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"I'm tired of all this nonsense about beauty being only skin-deep. That's deep enough. What do you want, an adorable pancreas?"

- John Keats

Beauty seems to be in the eyes of millions of beholders these days due the popularity the ABC television network reality television show "Extreme Makeover" which just launched a new season on Thursday.

If you happened to catch the show's transformation of Caroline, Catherine and Dan and found yourself amazed - then you're in for a taste of things to come right here in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Castaic resident Cherie Brazeal has been chosen as the candidate for the Santa Clarita Valley's own local take on the show.

The "Extreme Makeover Santa Clarita" committee chose Brazeal from a pool of more than 100 candidates as their Cinderella of choice.

The announcement was made on Sept. 10 at the Hyatt Valencia's Rose Garden amid fan-fare and press as Brazeal, 32, emerged in style from a limousine and welcomed with a bouquet of flowers and enthusiastic cheers and applause.

Brazeal, a married mother of two, thanked the committee for choosing her as the candidate in the first ever Extreme Makeover Santa Clarita.

"I am honored to have been chosen and I know my self-esteem is going to go through the roof," Brazeal said. "I see this as a positive change and my family and friends have been very supportive."

The Santa Clarita makeover is a cooperative effort sponsored by Dr. Marc Lussier, a Santa Clarita Valley based plastic surgeon. Lussier said the idea to bring an "extreme makeover" to the SCV was sparked when he heard local residents discussing the ABC program which "makes over" people by providing plastic surgery, cosmetic dentistry and other non-surgical services. "They were talking about the popular ABC reality show and how wonderful they thought it was and the difference it made to change a person's life for the better," Lussier said.

Due to this show and the interest it has generated, Lussier said a group of medical and non-medical specialists have come together to create this type of opportunity for someone in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Lussier is just part of the team who will transform Brazeal into the woman of her dreams. Plastic surgeon, Dr. D. David Saadat and cosmetic dentist Dr. Dell Goodrick will round out the team of surgeons who will nip and tuck in just the right places in an effort to help Brazeal look and feel her best.

Saadat said surgery is scheduled Oct. 3 followed by a fitness, skin care, make-up and wardrobe consultations. Lussier will perform the body work, which will include some breast work, liposuction and a few other adjustments. Saadat will perform the facial surgery which will include rhinoplasty, a possible chin implant and some adjustments to the eye area.

Cheryl Drake, who serves as a consultant for Lussier's office said the cost of Brazeal's procedures would have carried a price tag of approximately \$30,000 or more. Brazeal will be on the operating table for about eight hours. The doctors said they will perform all of the procedures within the eight hour surgery. Following her recovery from the surgery, Brazeal will begin her fitness, health and beauty program.

During the press conference, Brazeal confessed that from her early pre-teens on she has always dreamed of having cosmetic surgery performed. During the press conference, Brazeal recounted a time when a slide show was being shown at her school depicting the students in various activities.

"A photograph of me flashed onto the screen - it was a profile and everyone just laughed and pointed and I felt just awful," Brazeal said.

Goodrick said that through each of their specialties, the committee hopes to bring out the "real" person hidden behind less than perfect physical attributes.

"Because we will be accomplishing our makeover in a relatively short time span, we had to consider the logistics of the various potential treatments and overlap of recovery time," Goodrick explained.

"In some cases, the applicant's treatment needs were too great to be accomplished in our time frame," he said.

Goodrick explained that various health factors which could affect treatment outcome were also taken into consideration.

"We reviewed applications with an ear for their perceived need and the potential life-changing impact it would have for the person," Goodrick said. "It was, to say the least, an extremely difficult decision."

The multiple surgeries are in keeping with current trends to incorporate the whole person, rather than just isolated areas.

In addition to the physicians, participating committee members include local fitness expert Cheryl Broughton and Margo Miller owner of Margo's boutique in Newhall. Other members include Debbie Shrey; Debbie Meija; Shelley Hann; Richard Schlottman; Linda Hafizi; Gary Choppe; David Cadwell; Stella Pilarski; Greg Amsler, Steve's Florist; Ray Carlson and the Hyatt Valencia.

The participating committee members will donate their time and services to makeover. Brazeal will be responsible for such costs as pre-medical evaluations and prescriptions, which may be covered by health insurance. The entire process will be photographed and video-taped by Souvenir Productions. After the makeover is complete, Brazeal will have a coming out party in December at the Hyatt Valencia.

For more information about Extreme Makeover Santa Clarita: extememakeover.com

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