

Friends Turn Music Into Hope for Connecticut Couple Facing Stage IV Cancer

"Hot Rod Backyard" tells the story of friendship, resilience, and the healing power of creating something together while helping support Dave and Pam Munkelt on their cancer journey.



Carefree, Arizona Jun 26, 2026 (IssueWire.com) - For most of his life, Dave Munkelt has loved the simple things.

Spending time with his wife, Pam, and their dogs.

Classic hot rods.

Woodworking.

Backyard barbecues.

Good friends.

Music.

Those moments inspired countless memories over the years.

Then, in an instant, life changed.

After Dave was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer that had spread to his liver, conversations that once centered around cars, family, and music became filled with doctor's appointments, treatments, and uncertainty.

His lifelong friends, Robert Ciolino and Jennifer Franks Ciolino, knew they couldn't change the diagnosis.

But they were determined that cancer would not become the only story being written.

So they gave Dave and Pam something cancer could never take away.

They invited them to write a song.

Together, the four friends wrote "**Hot Rod Backyard**," a celebration of friendship, family, classic hot rods, music, laughter, and the backyard gatherings where some of life's greatest memories are made.

It wasn't a song about cancer.

It was a song about everything worth living for.

What began as a songwriting session soon became something much more.

Over the months that followed, Robert and Jennifer assembled an extraordinary team of musicians from around the world to help bring the song to life. Every new recording session, every rough mix, every instrumental performance, and every new vocal became something Dave and Pam could look forward to.

Conversations gradually shifted from treatments and test results to guitar solos, vocal performances, piano arrangements, and excitement about hearing the next version of the song.

For a little while, cancer no longer dominated every conversation.

Music did.

Long before "**Hot Rod Backyard**" was ever released, it had already accomplished something extraordinary.

It had given four friends countless reasons to smile together again.

To complete the recording, Whiskers' Edge Music assembled an outstanding international team of musicians:

Lead Vocals

Josh Gallagher

Lead Guitar, Rhythm Guitar & Bass

Riccardo Mazzaglia

Drums

Glenn Welman

Piano

Salpier

Produced by Robert Ciolino and Jennifer Franks Ciolino, "**Hot Rod Backyard**" celebrates far more than classic cars.

It celebrates everything they represent.

Family gathered around the grill.

Friends who become family.

Stories shared beneath an open sky.

Laughter that echoes long after the sun goes down.

The ordinary moments that quietly become the most extraordinary memories of our lives.

"We never set out to write a song about cancer," said Robert and Jennifer Ciolino. "We wanted to give Dave and Pam something joyful to look forward to. For months, we talked about lyrics instead of lab results, melodies instead of medicine, and music instead of fear. Looking back, we realized the greatest gift wasn't the finished song. It was the time we spent creating it together."

How You Can Help

Today, "**Hot Rod Backyard**" offers others the opportunity to become part of Dave and Pam's story.

The public is invited to support Dave and Pam Munkelt through their GoFundMe campaign. Every contribution, no matter the amount, helps ease the financial burden of Dave's ongoing cancer treatments and allows them to focus on spending precious time together with family and friends.

As a heartfelt thank you, everyone who donates through the GoFundMe campaign will receive a thank-you email within **12 hours** containing instructions for downloading "**Hot Rod Backyard**" as our gift of appreciation.

If you're unable to donate, sharing Dave and Pam's story with others is another meaningful way to help. Every conversation, every share, and every act of kindness remind a family that they are not walking this journey alone.

Every donation helps.

Every download celebrates friendship.

Every share spreads hope.

And every time "**Hot Rod Backyard**" is played, it reminds Dave and Pam that an entire community is standing beside them.

Because in the end...

"Hot Rod Backyard" isn't really about hot rods.

It's about the people beside us.

The memories we make.

The laughter we share.

And making time for the people we love while we still have the chance.

About Whiskers' Edge Music

Whiskers' Edge Music is the creative home of the songwriting team Robert Ciolino and Jennifer Franks Ciolino, inspired by their three rescued cat brothers, Bo, Jovi, and Toulouse. Their mission is to create authentic music that celebrates hope, resilience, adventure, and the moments that bring people together. Through collaborations with talented musicians around the world, they strive to leave the world a little brighter than they found it.

Resources

Dave and Pam Munkelt GoFundMe Campaign:

[Stronger Together: Support Dave and Pam in Their Fight Against Cancer](#)

Official Music Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/9eXD-7Lcihc>

Donors will receive download instructions for **"Hot Rod Backyard"** by email within 12 hours of their contribution.

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