



Valentine's Day celebrated across the Bay area

Tammie Fields

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Sergio and Julixa beat out 80 other couples from across the country in the Clearwater Marine Aquarium's Second Annual Wedding of a Lifetime contest.

St. Petersburg, Florida - Love is definitely in the air in the Tampa Bay area for Valentine's .

The Tampa Bay Heralds of Harmony men's barbershop chorus serenaded Donna Grabill Sunday morning at St. Petersburg Presbyterian Church at 737 3rd Avenue North.

Photo Gallery: Valentine's Day in the Bay area

Donna was near tears as her husband Brad, of 33 years, joined in. She says, "There's something that just touches your heart when they sing from their heart. It makes you smile. It makes you cry and that's a gift."

In Largo at the Florida Botanical Gardens at 12520 Ulmerton Road 34 grooms walked their brides down the aisle. This was the fourth year for the group wedding ceremony. The Clerk of the Circuit Court, Ken Burke, served as the officiant.

Josh and Erin Bowden were among the couples. Erin

says, "It's his birthday today too, so he won't forget his anniversary."

Edward and Mary Holdgate also got married during the ceremony. Mary said, "We get to celebrate our marriage with all these other people that are also celebrating. It's wonderful!" She said to her new husband, "Valentine's Day will never be the same will it?"

Edward answered back, "It never will be. Nope."

At the Clearwater Marine Aquarium on a platform over the main dolphin pool, a New York couple enjoyed the wedding of a lifetime as their friends and family watched. Sergio, the groom, is a New York City firefighter who was a part of the 9/11 rescue mission. His bride Julixa served 18 months in Iraq.

Their ring bearer was one of the dolphins. Julixa says, "This wedding came along perfectly. It's all we wanted for so many years and now finally we get our dream wedding."

The couple beat out 80 other couples from across the country in the Clearwater Marine Aquarium's Second Annual Wedding of a Lifetime contest. Their wedding package was valued at more than \$20,000, but they got their wedding for free.

The winning couple was chosen by CMA staff and the Gold and Diamond Source. Jeni Hatter is a spokesperson for the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and said, "It was a tough decision as there were so many incredible stories, but Julixa and Sergio have

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