

Music To Heal: Pediatric Interaction Program

Introduction

With the increasing institutionalization of the hospital setting, the primary focus of today's physicians has become the technological and physiological aspects of healing, at times leading to the neglect of the patient's emotional needs during long-term hospitalization. This emotional drain of hospital life is particularly apparent in pediatric patients, often hospitalized for months at a time when undergoing treatments for cancer and other chronic illnesses. I currently serve as president of *Music To Heal*, a non-profit organization I founded in 2004 that is composed of over one hundred UCLA undergraduate musicians who use their musical talents to perform for patients at hospitals and convalescent homes. As a result of my leadership role in *Music To Heal*, representatives from the newly developed Music Therapy Program at the UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital contacted me in October of 2007 in hopes of integrating undergraduates from the university into the music therapy process. After consultation with Vanya Green and Hilary Gan, the two music therapists at the UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital, I began to develop a plan for the "Pediatric Interaction Program".

My proposal for the Pediatric Interaction Program aims for the creation of a sub-program within *Music To Heal* devoted entirely to musical education and music therapy for children of the UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital. The program will have two primary goals: (1) To provide musical instruments for the playroom of the Mattel Children's Hospital; and (2) To mobilize local student musicians to provide weekly interactive music lessons for these pediatric patients. The concept of including a musical education component to the music therapy process is an innovative approach to pediatric healing, because it will give young patients the ability to heal *themselves* through their own musical abilities, even past the duration of their hospital stay.

Implementation

The first objective of the Pediatric Interaction Program will entail acquiring musical instruments for the playroom of the Mattel Children's Hospital. Instrument purchase will initially be supported through a portion of the funds from the Strauss Foundation, but these purchases will expand and continue through individual and commercial donations of musical instruments and equipment. Local music shops and individuals who donate instruments will be featured as "Friends of the Pediatric Interaction Program" on the Mattel Children's Hospital and *Music To Heal* websites. Moreover, students moving into UCLA dormitories often have no place to store

their instruments. These students could store their instruments at the playroom of the Mattel Children's Hospital for use by the patients while the student lives on campus, allowing them easy access to practice their instruments with the pediatric patients whenever they wish. The Volunteer Office will award UCLA Medical Center Volunteers who donate an instrument to the Mattel Children's Hospital with 50 hours of community service.

According to the music therapists at Mattel, the Children's Playroom and Teen Lounge of their facilities do not include any significant musical instruments (except a toy tambourine). This has become a significant impediment to the music therapy process, precluding musical interaction between patients and staff. Thus, there is a definite need for musical instruments at the Mattel Children's Hospital. Due to the possibility of spreading infections among patients, wind instruments would not be a practical option for long-term use at the hospital. Instrument acquisition by the Pediatric Interaction Program will thus focus on percussion and string instruments, such as a piano keyboard, guitar, violin, and the Q-Chord for patients staying for only a few weeks. The Q-Chord is a digital auto-harp that facilitates learning chords, reducing the time required to learn the instrument.

The second aim of this multi-faceted program will be to provide an interactive musical environment for the children staying at Mattel Children's Hospital through weekly or biweekly interactive music sessions, during which volunteer student musicians will teach the patients how to play a particular instrument. The continuity of the Pediatric Interaction Program will be cemented through a permanent page for the program on the *Music To Heal* website, which will provide details on how to get involved, along with the protocols for vaccination requirements, which can be fulfilled at UCLA's student health center. The program's sustainability will also be ensured through a permanent partnership with the UCLA Medical Center Volunteer Office, which will funnel volunteers with musical abilities toward the Pediatric Interaction Program, and promote the program at its monthly Orientation Sessions. The Volunteer Office gets hundreds of new volunteers every few weeks, and since they are already required to complete orientation and vaccination requirements, those volunteers who have had musical training meet all of the qualifications for involvement in the Pediatric Interaction Program.

Mobilizing undergraduates outside of the Medical Center to volunteer for the program will also be easily achievable, as students have already contacted me regarding their desire to contribute. *Music To Heal* is currently an established student organization at UCLA, and many volunteers would be drawn from the database of current members. Furthermore, UCLA's Music Department is extremely restrictive, limiting involvement in

musical ensembles strictly to students within the major. As a result, non-music majors are extremely eager to become volunteers as a way to hold on to their musical talents, while simultaneously helping the community.

Significance to the Community

According to recent research conducted by the American Music Therapy Association, brain imaging has shown a connection between neurological areas utilized when learning to play music, and brain areas devoted to emotion, communication, and mathematical skills. Furthermore, studies have shown music therapy to be more effective when it involves interactive music-making by the patient, particularly in increasing pain threshold, alleviating depression and stress, and enhancing memory and communication skills. Thus, with the help of the Strauss Foundation, the Pediatric Interaction Program will promote overall wellbeing in the patients of Mattel Children's Hospital by addressing both their emotional and their physiological needs.

When children must endure the pain and mindless monotony of long-term hospitalization, making use of their hospital time to develop a musical talent will mean the world to them, especially since their teachers will be young and enthusiastic college students. Moreover, with the average age of patients at the Mattel Children's Hospital being seven-years-old, these children are at a stage in neurological development at which they are most open to developing a musical ability. The Pediatric Interaction Program would not only improve the quality of life of children at the hospital by diverting their attention away from their pain, but it will also provide them with a musical skill that will continue to heal them throughout their lives. The representatives of the Mattel Children's Hospital, along with the dozens of enthusiastic volunteers who have already shown interest in the program, all share the passion for public service possessed by Mr. Donald A. Strauss. I have no doubt that with the support of the Strauss Foundation, the Pediatric Interaction Program will have an indelible impact on the healing process of the patients at the Mattel Children's Hospital, and will encourage hospitals in the community to place greater emphasis on the emotional aspects of hospitalization.

Timeline

- **February-May, 2008:** Recruit core group of volunteers; volunteers will complete the UCLA Medical Center Orientation and receive vaccinations. On **February 4, 2008**, volunteers will make a preliminary visit to perform for Mattel patients, prior to the purchase of any instruments. Development of the Pediatric Interaction Program page on the *Music To Heal* website will begin.

- **June-September, 2008:** Strauss Foundation Funds will support the purchase and installation of the initial set of instruments indicated in the budget. Local music shops and individuals will be contacted for instrument donations. On **June 14, 2008**, volunteers will make a brief presentation at the Spring Concert of the Southeast Symphony Association Music Conservatory, advocating the Pediatric Interaction Program and requesting musical instrument donations from the audience.
- **October-December, 2008:** Volunteers will begin weekly or biweekly interactive music sessions with the patients at Mattel Children's Hospital. Instrument donations will continue.
- **January-March, 2009:** Brief presentation will be made at the UCLA Medical Center Volunteer Orientation to recruit more participants. The Volunteer Office will be contacted about establishing the Pediatric Interaction Program as a permanent Volunteer Department, for which volunteer hours will be received. Interactive music sessions will continue.
- **April-May, 2009:** Volunteers will develop a short video about the Pediatric Interaction Program to promote similar programs in other local hospitals. Interactive music sessions will continue.

Budget

Category	Specific Items		Total Cost
Musical Instrument Purchases	Yamaha Digital Piano for Children's Playroom		\$1,800
	Yamaha Digital Piano for Teen Lounge		\$1,800
	Shipment and Installation Costs for 2 Digital Pianos		\$500
	Yamaha Acoustic (3/4) Guitar- Children's Playroom		\$225
	Yamaha Acoustic Guitar- Teen Lounge		\$225
	Suzuki QChord- Children's Playroom		\$200
	Suzuki QChord- Teen Lounge		\$200
Musical Equipment	Standard Music Stands	\$25 each x 2	\$50
	Microphone (for singing sessions/presentations)		\$50
Teaching Materials	Beginner Music Books (for various instruments)		\$500
	Sheet Music (for various instruments)		\$400
Vaccination Costs for Volunteers without Insurance	MMR Vaccination	\$50 each x 15	\$750
	2-Step TB Skin Test - Free at UCLA Ashe Center		\$0
	Doctor Visits for Physician's Health Clearance		\$200
UCLA Med. Center Volunteer Uniform	Volunteer Jacket (Required for all Hospital Volunteers)	\$35 each x 15	\$525
Website Development Software	Macromedia Dreamweaver		\$500
Program Advocacy to Potential Musical Instrument Donors	Brochures/Pamphlets		\$75
	Transportation (to make presentations)		\$75
Student Fees and Housing Cost	Supplementing education cost		\$1,925
			\$10,000