

CENTRAL BAPTIST HOSPITAL

William G. Sisson
President

1740 Nicholasville Road
Lexington, KY 40503

859-260-6100
859-260-6119 fax

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To Whom It May Concern:

I feel compelled to write this letter to you, the people who sponsor Charlie Lustman, to thank you for your generosity and commitment to the fight against cancer. As a sponsor you can be far removed from the actual implementation of things that you support and may rely on letters such as this to help you understand the significance of what you do for the cancer community. Your investment in supporting the Musical Hope Campaign is truly appreciated and needed more than you may ever fully understand.

I would like to start this letter with a brief background of our institution so you can get a feel for our patient base before commenting on the impact of Charlie's visit.

The Central Baptist Hospital Cancer Center is a regional cancer center located in Lexington, KY that services Central and Eastern Kentucky. Eastern Kentucky rests in the heart of Appalachia and is a very impoverished part of the country. Top quality medical services are not very accessible so many people travel several hours to Lexington to receive care. They are stressed over their cancer diagnosis but for many of them this is just the tip of the iceberg because once diagnosed, they may face significant financial issues that go along with this diagnosis. To start, how will they get back and forth to Lexington for their treatments? They oftentimes have old vehicles that can find the journey taxing because they don't know when something will breakdown. Paying for gas eats up a large part of their already stretched food budget and the trickle down effect continues from there.

This is not our entire patient base but it is certainly a sizeable portion and one that really needs a little life put back into their cancer journey. That is exactly what Charlie's visit did for these people. He came into our facility and caused a distraction from their disease. As he spent the day visiting the many different areas that house our cancer patients, frowns were turned upside down, joy replaced sadness and people, if only for a minute, forgot about what they were going through and became connected to the possibility of Hope. That is what Charlie brought to our patients.....a musical message of hope.

He then took that message to our local television station and ended his long day with an enthusiastic, heart-felt visit with those who were staying at our local Hope Lodge. WOW what a day! He was able to touch so many lives in the twelve hours that he spent with us and at each visit along the way he shared his message of hope and inspiration. We feel blessed as an institution to have had him spend the day with us.

The Healing Force

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Before closing, I would like to share a very touching moment with you. One that left an indelible mark on my soul and one that I will never forget. As we went into our outpatient infusion area there was an older gentleman sitting in one of the chairs. Beside him sat a younger lady who was receiving treatment. As Charlie performed, this older man, with a stern look on his face, took out his iphone and began recording Charlie's performance. I did not realize the significance of this until later that evening at the Hope Lodge when his oncology nurse told me his story.

About a year ago his only child (the young lady sitting next to him) was diagnosed with a blastoma. He and his wife were devastated by this diagnosis, as any parent would be, but they pulled it together and came to all of their daughter's treatment to support their child. Shortly after the daughter started her treatments, his wife began feeling bad but, because of her daughter's situation, she put off going to the doctor. Eventually the wife's skin began to turn yellow at which point she finally went to the doctor where she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died 6 weeks later. The husband/father, probably distraught by the loss of his wife and the reality that he may soon lose his only child to this dreaded disease, has not spoken a word to anyone at our center since his wife died. He stills come to all of his daughter's treatments but sits quietly in his chair.

After Charlie left the area, this gentleman came up to this nurse and asked if she knew that he (Charlie) was going to be there that day. Shocked by him speaking she replied a truthful reply of "yes, but we did not know when." This gentleman then responded with "that was the most uplifting experience I have had" and he quietly returned to his seat to wait out the remainder of his daughter's treatment.

If you ever think that what you are supporting is not of value, please think of this story. Charlie and his music spoke to this man and connected to him in a way that none of our staff has been able to do. We have a limited budget so for Charlie to come into our center free of charge with no strings attached truly was a blessing for our patients.

Thank you for all you are doing to support this effort and for having the vision to take a leap of faith that this Musical Hope Campaign would do what it is intended to do....bring hope to people who need it most.

Sincerely,

Mary S. Buckles

Mary S. Buckles
Cancer Center Development Coordinator