

FOX CHASE CANCER CENTER

December 3, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

This past week, we had the great good fortune of welcoming Charlie Lustman and his one-man Musical HOPE Campaign to Fox Chase Cancer Center.

In anticipating his visit, we looked forward to meeting a cancer survivor and musician who would be able to lift the spirits of our patients. Charlie certainly fulfilled those expectations, but how limited those expectations turned out to be! During the day Charlie spent with us, we began to appreciate the true depth and power of his music and message, which reaches well beyond an understanding of illness and health to an empowering appreciation of life and its larger meaning for each of us. His visit was a magical experience for everyone – patients, family members, clinicians, scientists, and administrators alike.

Charlie spent much of the day visiting with patients in the infusion room, where the intensity of focus associated with providing chemotherapy for many patients sometimes masks the fear and isolation those patients may be feeling. Charlie approached each patient individually and with sensitivity, listening empathetically to their stories and their feelings. And to each he then offered his songs, rooted in his own experience with a difficult and frightening cancer, songs filled with understanding, love, hope, and humor – reflections of Charlie's own inspiring orientation toward life.

Later, a chance meeting with three surgeons in the halls of the hospital turned into an impromptu opportunity to thank them for the life-saving work they do, with an on-topic song about his own surgery and follow-up treatment. A drop-by visit with the president and CEO and the COO brought smiles and hugs all around.

An afternoon concert in the Center's cafeteria, where Charlie was introduced by another survivor of the rare cancer he confronted, allowed more than a hundred administrators and scientists to share in Charlie's uplifting message delivered throughout the hospital that day. All of us returned to our various roles across the Center with renewed energy, optimism, and dedication to our stated mission: To prevail over cancer.

Charlie's songs are wonderful, expressing the fears, challenges, and losses of the cancer experience in a way that patients in the midst of treatment can identify with, yet embedding them, with gentle humor, in a vision of growth and redemption that inspires his listeners with hope. We have never seen so many smiling patients. Beyond the songs, Charlie brings the gift of his own unique energy and charisma. He brought a special joy to Fox Chase this week.

When Charlie first called to talk about bringing his Musical HOPE Campaign to Fox Chase, I recalled the launch in early 2010 of our Love Versus Cancer campaign. The simple message of Love Versus Cancer is that, "Love unites us all – patients, families, friends, nurses, doctors, scientists, survivors, and so many more – in our efforts to end cancer. Medicine provides the all-important clinical tools to treat cancer – but love bolsters the heart and spirit to help us rise above the disease." Charlie's message of love and hope clearly resonates with these thoughts, and we look forward to our next opportunity to again host and celebrate him in our community of caregiving.

Sincerely,

Franklin Hoke
Vice President for Communications