

Soft Money

Long known for their generous support of organizations that improve people's lives, oil-industry leaders in the Dallas-Fort Worth area have created KidLinks Foundation particularly to help children.

The oil industry always enjoys hearing commodity prices to the tune of \$5 gas and \$30 oil. At times, it hears the blues. Yet at all times these days, children in hospitals and special-service facilities in northeast Texas have a happy song in their hearts—courtesy of the oil industry.

The muses are Jim Newton, Paul G. Hill, Monte Stewart and Noel Paul Stookey. Newton and Hill tour hospitals, courtesy of Celebration Shop Inc., a beneficiary of funding from Fort Worth- and Dallas-area industry members individually and through their companies, especially via an annual golf tournament organized by KidLinks Foundation. Stewart fills in at metro-area hospitals while Newton and Hill are on the road. Stookey, who is Paul in the 40-year-old musical group Peter, Paul & Mary, joins them in developing music and CDs.

Newton, founder and president of Celebration Shop, says, "I love to sing. I love to write songs. And, not just any songs but songs that make a difference. When I see a child who has every reason to not respond, who comes into the [hospital playroom] very rigid, but in a minute his hand starts going or a toe starts tapping—music is a tool for that child to come

out of his isolation and maybe forget just for a little while the hardships he has to endure in the hospital."

The northeast Texas oil industry's involvement began with the Dallas Energy Finance Discussion Group, which had built a surplus of funds over the years and gave it to Celebration Shop. Eventually, KidLinks Foundation was formed to host an annual golf tournament to benefit Celebration Shop's work as well as other programs involving sick children.

At Children's Medical Center of Dallas in January, several young patients and their parents as well as hospital personnel were gathered in a playroom for one of Newton's regular concerts, as sunlight streamed in and Newton's voice spilled into the halls. The children rattled noisemakers that Newton brings and distributes at each show. They sing along on cue "Oh, what fun" and "Hee hee hee" and "Ho ho ho." Smiles are contagious.

One bashful 4-year-old with thick dark hair, large brown eyes and chubby cheeks was initially planted between her parents but eventually found the courage to leave the haven to join another child at a table. Her grin and giggles in response to Newton's music were unaffected by swelling around one eye and a large scar across a cheek. According to the Celebration Shop song "Together Differently," she is as different and special as anyone else in the room—sick or well, young or grown.

"We try to say in our songs that nothing—not disease, not treatment for disease that puts you through hell to try to get well, not what anybody else thinks about you—can take away 'you,'" Newton says. "You will always be 'you.' The song 'Together Differently' says 'you'll be you and I'll be me and we'll live together, differently.'"

Carol Lowery, child-life specialist, Cook Children's Medical Center, says, "When a child is hospitalized there are so many issues that go along with it—self-esteem, being different from other children. 'My life is different from before. I'm not in my routine.' The songs of Celebration Shop seem to make all of this go away."

After lunch, at Baylor Pediatrics, Newton sings to a high-school senior whose dreams may be dashed by the return of a childhood disease. She and her mother cry, providing some relief to the pent-up anxiety the prognosis has brought them.

"It can be very meaningful for these children and their parents to have a distraction, a break, and Jim's music provides that and words of comfort and under-



One-year-old Abigail Hanlon enjoys Jim Newton's music at North Texas Hospital for Children in Dallas, along with J.W. Brown (l), with Friedman Billings Ramsey in Dallas and a KidLinks Foundation founder, and Jim Byrd, KidLinks executive director, during a visit to the hospital by Newton.

(Advertorial)

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standing. It helps all of us. We all look forward to Jim's visits," one nurse says.

At North Texas Hospital for Children, a teen-age girl undergoing treatment for cancer and wearing a surgeon's-type mask joined in the fun while a boisterous 1-year-old, Abigail Hanlon, danced, climbed, hugged adult participants, and generally provided sideshow entertainment.

At Cook Children's in Fort Worth, a mother and daughter relaxed while Newton quietly strummed a relaxing ballad in the pediatric intensive care unit for a hyper-energetic newborn twin who was born with a generous dose of enthusiasm, according to the tired mother. The other twin is hyper-calm.

Hospital personnel on Newton's tour say that at times they can watch a child's pulse calm when he and Hill begin singing to them, and their other vital signs improve. The staff's own vitals often improve. Many can be found tapping a foot and humming along, at their desks and down the halls from Jim's concert.



From left to right on a recent visit to Children's Medical Center of Dallas: Sheryl Wylie, fund-raising executive; Paul Hill, Celebration Shop; Bonnie Shea, Merit Energy Co.; Robert Matejek, Merit Energy Co.; Jim Byrd, KidLinks Foundation executive director; Ellen Hollon, Children's Medical Center director of child life and child development; Ivan Irwin Jr., Hunt Petroleum Corp.

Music therapy

Music is believed to be important in healing, stimulating the release of cortisol, a hormone produced by the adrenal cortex gland. It increases hepatic gluconeogenesis, hepatic glycogenolysis, and protein catabolism, and has other positive physiological effects that are believed to boost the immune system. Its highest natural concentration is just after waking, and declines throughout the day.

Although a relationship between music and health has been suspected since at least Plato, music began to have a role in modern medicine after World War I when musicians began visiting veterans in hospitals, according to the American Music Therapy Association. Visible improvements in patients' outlooks caused doctors and nurses to request that musicians be hired, and college curricula were developed for specialized training in the field. The first music-therapy degree was founded at Michigan State University in 1944.

Lois Person, child-life specialist, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, says, "Music has a huge impact on children, on their ability to tolerate pain and their feelings. Jim's music often leads to laughter and we know humor is healing as well. There is research that demonstrates that. It's a very special time and I know it really helps in their healing. I believe in that."

Music also affects mood. Dr. Joanne Sanders, Cook Children's Medical Center, says, "A lot of our children have to undergo painful procedures. One of the distractions we use is music. The children always have a choice of music to use. A lot of them will choose Jim [Newton]'s music. It makes them feel safe and it takes a painful procedure and makes it a little better for the child—certainly more tolerable. It's a blessing for the child. It's a gift Jim gives to these children."

Music therapy is used on the "well" too. It's no accident that most business "hold" music is classical or "soft," that infants are sung lullabies, that there is "elevator music," and that parties are accompanied with

upbeat tunes.

Particular types of music are also believed to contribute to increased focus and retention. A 1996 study of SAT results by the College Entrance Exam Board Service found that students who sang or played a musical instrument scored 51 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and an average of 39 points higher on math. Various studies have shown that Baroque work, such as that of Mozart, Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Handel and Bach, can relieve stress, improve communication and increase efficiency. This genre of music is at 60 beats per second—the same rate as a resting heartbeat.

Carla James, physical therapist, Cook Children's Medical Center, says, "Music helps kids regardless of whether they speak English or Spanish or another language, and regardless of background. It unites them and they're clapping. They feel like they're a group. I think that helps them heal. When Jim [Newton] comes, it's a great opportunity for the staff to relax a bit and let go some of the stress of having to deal with different situations. It rejuvenates the staff."

Lacey Camp, a mother who experienced a visit from Newton at a time when she and her family were "at bottom," says, "It's very hard to stay depressed and sunk in your world when you're singing songs about how great the world can be and the possibilities are." Her daughter was 9 at the time the Camps met Newton and going blind in one eye due to multiple sclerosis. Newton was visiting Cook Children's and Camp convinced her daughter to go to the playroom to hear him play—"anything to feel normal." Newton's smile was "as wide as Texas."

"If you're ever down in the dumps, play one of his tapes. Life looks very different when you're through," Camp says.

The muses' work

Newton has a bachelor's in philosophy from McMurray College, a master's of theology from Southern Methodist University, and has done post-graduate work at Princeton Theological Seminary. He was chaplain at Parkland Memorial and Methodist Hospitals in Dallas, and is president of Celebration Shop.

Hill has a bachelor's in music, theory and composition from Southern Methodist University and is creative consultant for Celebration Shop.

Hill says, "Only through working with Jim and Celebration Shop have I become aware of how deeply music can affect a person. We all have music we love and that has touched us."

He assists in writing music for the program. "In the process, we go directly to child-life specialists with conceptual ideas to get their feedback. Most of the time we've been close but surprisingly we've been told



Jared Stogryn, 7, sings along during a visit from Jim Newton at Cook Children's Medical Center.

how a line could have an undesired impact and we go back and revise it."

Stewart is a former teacher and talented children's performer. His local performances, while Newton and Hill are on the road, has helped more than double the number of kids Celebration Shop reaches in the Dallas-Fort Worth-area.

Stookey and his colleagues in Peter, Paul & Mary have always included children's music in their work. Remember Puff the Magic Dragon? Stookey develops

Where to Find the Music

The English version of all three CDs (*Best I Can Be*, *We Can Do* and *World Around Song*) may be purchased through the Newworld Store at Newworld-multimedia.com. Cassette tapes and songbooks are available through Celebration Shop at Celebrationshop.org. Spanish versions of *Best I Can Be* and *We Can Do* are available on cassette and CD. *World Around Song* will be available in Spanish in Spring 2003.

All Stressed Out?

Healthy individuals can use music for stress reduction via active music-making, such as drumming, as well as passive listening for relaxation, according to the American Music Therapy Association. Music is often used in exercise, another stress-reduction tool.

Music Therapy News

For more information about music therapy, contact American Music Therapy Association Inc., 8455 Colesville Road, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD, 20910, 301-589-3300, Fax: 301-589-5175.

KidLink Golfing Opportunities

The Noel Paul Stookey Shootout

The golf tournament, benefiting Celebration Shop, will be held March 20, 2003, at the Golf Club at Castle Hills. Players will include actors Burton Gilliam (Blazing Saddles) and James Hampton (F Troop), as well as Dallas Cowboys stars Tony Cassillas and Clint Stoerner. To register, call 214-720-7500 or e-mail KidLinks5@aol.com

The Saturday Series

KidLinks Foundation will be the beneficiary of a special Saturday Series pro-am golf tournament May 24 with 22 pros who miss the cut on Friday at the Bank of America Colonial Golf Tournament in Fort Worth. As many as 88 amateur slots are available. More details are available from KidLinks Foundation at 214-720-7500 and kidlinks5@aol.com.

KidLinks Energy Golf Classic 2003

The 2003 KidLinks tournament will be held at Las Colinas Country Club, Irving, Texas, in September. To compete and/or make a donation, such as hole sponsorship, beverage sponsorship and prize donations, go to KidLinksdfw.org or 214-720-7500.

music with Hill and Newton for children, aimed at their self-esteem and growth. And he assists with fund-raising. An avid golfer, the upcoming Noel Paul Stookey Shootout in northeast Texas benefits Celebration Shop's music-recording program, HugWorks.

Stookey says, "Celebration Shop has become a second musical home for me, a place where many of the musical and life-encouraging lessons I've learned these past 40 years with Peter, Paul & Mary are given new opportunities—as inspirations for children less physically and emotionally fortunate than others."

He believes the oil-industry's support is not coincidental. "Some oil and gas producers are concerned about the energy of the future, which includes our young people. We need to invest in our young people."

KidLinks Foundation's funding goes beyond support for Celebration Shop. Children's Medical Center of Dallas has two half-time music therapists, adding a second one with money from KidLinks last fall. They see children individually and with groups of children.

"A lot of referrals the music therapists respond to come from child-life specialists. Sometimes they get a referral from a physician or from a nurse or someone who recognizes a child is having difficulty coping. Sometimes the children respond to music when they don't respond to much else," says Ellen C. Hollon, di-

rector, child life and child development, Children's Medical Center of Dallas.

The in-house music therapists, who use music as part of specific medical treatment, provide individualized treatment. An adolescent cancer patient can be dealing with hair loss, repeated needle sticks and other challenges. "It's difficult. We try to find a common place to meet that child emotionally and developmentally with music. [The therapist] may find a song that gives the child an opportunity to beat a drum because they're mad, or put together a cassette of a child's favorite music to help that child relax when they're in treatment. It helps them cope."

Hollon is on the Celebration Shop advisory board. "There is a vision that is limited only by the imagination and money." Celebration Shop has translated two of its three CDs of music to Spanish, and work is under way on the third, to reach the growing Spanish-speaking population in Texas.

Jim Byrd, executive director, KidLinks Foundation, says, "The oil and gas industry is concerned about people, the least of whom are children. That's how KidLinks came together: kids plus golf."

Celebration Shop continued for 19 years at a tremendously underfunded level, he adds. "It's incredible the potential Celebration Shop has before it."

With some of the proceeds of the last KidLinks tournament, it purchased a van from a dealership at cost for Celebration Shop's use.

Newton got involved in singing for children in hospitals initially as a favor to a very good friend whose son had died of cancer and had asked Newton to sing at the hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Bedford, Texas-based Celebration Shop had been started already, in 1981, and focused on youth-rally performances and college-ministry programs.

Newton was in Ohio on a tour at the time. He didn't know exactly what to do but just sang and sang. He witnessed the children's response and the hospital personnel and parents' joy and gratefulness. One parent was in tears.

"As I walked down the hall, something inside told me this is where I belong," he says.

Dr. Sanders at Cook Children's says, "Children who are three, four, five years old will know when they are dying. To be able to take a child like that and give them the gift of music, to allow them to be able to smile, to be able to laugh, to be able to lift their spirits with music during a time like that, I can't believe anyone wouldn't want that."

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